FREE VET ADVICE
INSIDE EVERY ISSUE

GET PEACE OF MIND
Why we all want to be self-sufficient

The COUNTRY SMALLHOLDER

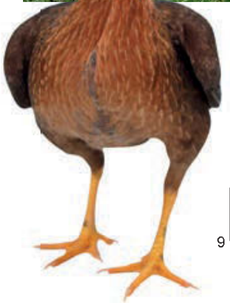
July 2023
thecountrysmallholder.com
£4.99

LIVESTOCK SPECIAL

Micro pigs
Alpacas and the law
Eco-dairy diversity
DIY meat smoking
Tanning sheepkins
Swarming bees
Boer Goats

PLUS
Growing your own chilli sauce
Buying safe farm machinery

SHOW EXTRA
SUMMER FUN ON YOUR DOORSTEP



PRACTICAL POULTRY

- How you can identify hard feather chickens from soft feather
- Using saddles to prevent damage to poultry when mating
- Why you need to watch out and prevent the ruthless redmite

JULY 2023
9 772755 259019 07

VISIT…

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

SIROMER 拖拉机 超豪华 FLATPACK TRACTORS

SIROMER

TRACTORS
& EQUIPMENT

With you every turn of the wheel

HUGE RANGE
of agricultural equipment

With over 100 lines of equipment in stock, we can provide the ideal item to do the job you need with the tractor you have. Our range of tractors and machinery plus 20 years of expertise means that we can supply the right tractor and machinery package for you.

First rate support & peace of mind

Siromer tractors have been importing tractors and machinery for over 20 years. Since then we have sold over 4000 compact tractors & built a solid reputation for providing high spec, top quality manufactured, robust & affordable compact tractors along with our 1st rate customer support.

A fully stocked UK parts department dispatches parts on a next day basis, keeping you up and running whatever happens.

Supported by a nationwide network of agricultural engineers, offering everything; sales, servicing and tractor asssembly.

With 4000 tractors in the UK your nearest Siromer owner is less than 10 miles away!

Call for more details and a free brochure pack

01253 799 029 **www.siromer.online**

The COUNTRY SMALLHOLDER

Join our Facebook group for practical advice, good conversation and like-minded friends

HOW DOES IT WORK

Do you know the answer?

Does anybody know how this thing works? Just bought it and it's currently set for rowing up. I've freed up all the mechanisms but cannot work out how it goes from rowing up to flicking out for turning the hay?

GETTING MY GOAT

Happy goats, happy fences

Really happy with my new goat field scratch post. This should save the fences.

NEW USES FOR FLEECES

Can I use my fleeces as insulation?

Hi all, never posted here before but thought there would be a chance the collective might have some knowledge to help Raw fleece insulation I've got a log 'cabin' that will soon be getting put up in my garden as an office and I'm wondering.... Has anyone ever used raw fleece for insulation of a 'building'?

FEEDING DUCKS

Choosing a container for feeding young ducks

Duck feeders - how do you feed your ducks? (Mine are still young so need pellets ad-lib but later will be getting lots from foraging).

SIGN UP FOR MORE!

Get The Country Smallholder Newsletter

Catch up between the magazines with things that are happening in the smallholding world. Check out our website to sign up. *thecountrysmallholder.com*

A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome!

My smallholding is in the East of England and it has been a truly disappointing spring and early summer. A dry winter was followed by a very wet period which quickly morphed into a cold, dry early spring followed by a colder, dryer May. As a result, gardening has been a rather gruelling experience, not helped by noting the number of casualties from the two cold snaps in the winter – some despite being in a heated greenhouse. I'm leaning towards exploring permaculture. On the plus side, the hay field has liked this weather and there is certainly a lot more of it than last year, so we are just waiting for some warmer weather now to get it in the barn. I also have a number of hens and chicks and am trying some eggs that I bought via post in an incubator and I've not lacked for eggs from a small flock of cross bred bantams (Pekins/Silkies).

MORE GOOD NEWS

On the avian flu front as well as now being able to allow birds to roam freely (as long as we practice biosecurity), there is news that in Northern Ireland the ban on bird gatherings such as sales and poultry shows, is being lifted. Our poultry vet talks more about his in his column and our pure breed poultry correspondent is hoping it might extend to the rest of the UK at some point soon. Also, at last, there is serious talk of allowing vaccination beginning with zoological collections of birds. With what, how and when still very much open for discussion, but with what we all learnt during Covid, we know that there are many questions yet to be answered on that. But at least its on the table which it hasn't really been before. We already routinely vaccinate for other major poultry diseases so we have that model too.

ALPACA ASSESSMENT

Recently I have become interested in fibre (wool included), although I am a rubbish crafter apart from dry felting. I have taken the British Alpaca Society (BAS) course on assessing alpacas which included conformation and fleece assessments. I recommend this course; I learnt so much and it was clearly explained. A friend let me 'help' with her alpaca shearing so I could try and put theory into practice, helped by a very knowledgeable shearer who gave me much to think about. I now have four alpaca fleeces to 'grade' and play with.

FACEBOOK SITES FOR SMALLHOLDERS

We have a very active Facebook site for this magazine as you can see in the sidebar but I've also come across a few that as smallholders you might find amusing (and even inspiring). First is the ever useful 'The Baler Twine Appreciation Society' which ranges from creative practical uses of baler twine such as holding gates together to upholstering chairs – good luck with that one. Then there is the Bath Tubs in Fields Appreciation Society which studies the natural history of bathtubs in fields, relaxing, sheltering lambs, upside down and even holding water. But what about the Corrugated Iron Appreciation Society highlighting the rural uses at home and abroad? Endlessly fascinating. Finally gates have a cluster of groups, the Gate Appreciation Society, the Gate and Stonewalls Society and a temptingly named Pointless Gates. Enjoy!

Liz Wright

Get a Free-range Lifestyle

Subscribe to the all-new Country Smallholder and you'll find everything you need to feel free. Every month you'll get inspirational stories, profitable ideas, and all the good advice you need for a country way of life.

Hop over to page 68 and get started!

The COUNTRY SMALLHOLDER

EDITOR
Liz Wright
thecountrysmallholder.ed@kelsey.co.uk

EES EDITOR **Claire Waring**
POULTRY EDITOR **Liz Fairbrother**
GROWING EDITOR **Kim Stoddart**
POULTRY VET **David Parsons, MRCVS**
ALPACA EDITOR **Joy Whitehead**
SHEEP EDITOR **Liz Shankland**
SMALLHOLDING PEOPLE **Helen Babbs**
PIG EDITOR **Rachel Graham**

CONTRIBUTORS AND SUPPORTERS

British Hen Welfare Trust, Vet Partners, John Sones, Henrietta Breitmayer, Michael Wale, Tamsin Cooper, RSPB, Mick Knight, Grant Brereton, Sue Field, Meriel Younger, Humane Slaughter Association, Paul Donavan, Mark Kerr, Cartmell Shepherd Solicitors, Lindsey Coker, National Honey Show.

Get the latest news and meet fellow smallholders on on our website and facebook page

thecountrysmallholder.com
@ thecountrysmallholder

See the NEW COMPETITION FOR NEWSAGENTS.

THE SMALLHOLDER

A JOURNAL FOR
ALLOTMENT HOLDERS. POULTRY FARMERS. SMALL OWNERS.
MARKET GARDENERS. LIVE STOCK BREEDERS. BEE KEEPERS.

SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

A PAIR OF WHITE LEGHORNS.

The Smallholder was established in 1910. This issue is from July of that year

---

ADVERTISMENT SALES
SALES DIRECTOR **Russell Bedford**
01732 445325
SALES **Wendy King**
01732 448748 Talk Media Sales Ltd

PRODUCTION
HEAD OF PRINT AND DESIGN **Nick Bond**
01732 447006 production@talkmediasales.co.uk

CLASSIFIEDS
Tel: 0906 802 0279 Calls cost 65p per minute from a BT landline; other networks and mobiles may vary. Lines open Monday-Friday, 10am-4pm)

MANAGEMENT
DIVISIONAL MANAGING DIRECTOR **Steve Kendall**
PUBLISHER **Fiona Mercer**
GROUP WEB EDITOR **Rachel Harper**
SUBSCRIPTIONS MARKETING MANAGER **Claire Aspinall**
DIGITAL MARKETING EXECUTIVE **Daisy Bury**
RETAIL DIRECTOR **Steve Brown**
PRINT PRODUCTION CONTROLLER **Kelly Oriss**

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND BACK ISSUES
01959 543747
shop.kelsey.co.uk/tcs
cs@kelsey.co.uk

DISTRIBUTION
Seymour Distribution Limited
2 East Poultry Avenue, London
EC1A 9PT, Tel. 020 7429 4000
www.seymour.co.uk

Kelsey Media, The Granary, 1-2 Downs Court, Yalding ME18 6AL

OUR PROMISE TO YOU

The Country Smallholder champions ethical photography that prioritises the welfare of animals and the environment. We fully support humane and sustainable farming practices and try to reflect these within our pages. Wherever possible we champion organic crop growing and support working with nature. We aim to promote best possible practice in animal welfare and enviromental policy.

Kelsey Media 2021 © all rights reserved. Kelsey Media is a trading name of Kelsey Publishing Ltd. Reproduction in whole or in part is forbidden except with permission in writing from the publishers. Note to contributors: articles submitted for consideration by the editor must be the original work of the author and not previously published. Where photographs are included, which are not the property of the contributor, permission to reproduce them must have been obtained from the owner of the copyright. The editor cannot guarantee a personal response to all letters and emails received. The views expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Publisher. Kelsey Publishing Ltd accepts no liability for products and services offered by third parties.

Kelsey Publishing Ltd uses a multi-layered privacy notice, giving you brief details about how we would like to use your personal information. For full details, visit www.kelsey.co.uk , or call 01959 543524. If you have any questions, please ask as submitting your details indicates your consent, until you choose otherwise, that we and our partners may contact you about products and services that will be of relevance to you via direct mail, phone, email or SMS. You can opt out at ANY time via email: data.controller@kelsey.co.uk or 01959 543524.

UK annual subscription £64.87
Europe and North America annual subscription £78
Rest of the World annual subscription £85

KELSEYmedia

Pot-bellied pigs, Kune Kunes and micro pigs need feeding differently to more traditional breeds

Contents *July 2023*

8 News roundup
Surveying hedges in your area; is bTB affecting mental health? Showcasing a village history; What rural businesses and smallholders think about the loss of small abbatoirs

10 Making goat keeping eco-friendly
Whilst getting good production and health

14 Preparing fleeces for products
What you need to know about VM and Lanolin

16 The birth of a mini-mill
How a smallholder solved her processing problem

18 Know all about your alpacas
Why and how you should keep records

22 Let your garden keep you
Tackling a the cost of living by growing

24 The perfect homemade Chilli sauce
Keep it hot – or medium – or cool, your choice

29 Country recipes from your garden
When Beetroot meets Chocolate for a sweet delight

30 How to smoke your meat
For that home produced flavour

37 Property – where to live?
A versatile smallholding in Shropshire

48 Show Diary for Summer
A great day out at a countryside event near you

65 Micro pigs need food to suit them
Size matters – match nutrition to the breed

70 Weather proof your veg patch
Through our changing summers

72 How to house a swarm
Getting them settled into a hive safely

78 Eco Living
Helping wildlife through a sizzling summer

80 Your questions answered by experts
Getting a CPH number for cattle keeping; hens and ragwort; keeping turkeys; raised bed and vet advice on sheep health

83 You write!
An certificate for eggs from WW1; The tree friendly sheep

85 Machinery Matters – Keep it legal
What makes equipment safe and within the law

88 Tip tips for towing livestock
Don't get caught out, be prepared

90 Meeting a smallholder business
Tanning sheep skins for a luxurious finish

93 Smallholder Clubs
Focus on Boer goats

94 FREE CLASSIFIEDS
Sell your surplus stuff free of charge

98 Join the Club
Listing like minded smallholder associations

FEATURED CONTRIBUTORS THIS MONTH

Tamsin Cooper says goats can help ecologically through their grazing Page 10

Andrew Oldham keeps the costs down by growing vegetables Page 22

David Parsons MRCVS with better news on avian flu and on showing eggs Page 42

Kim Stoddart prepares her veg patch to cope with changing weather Page 70

Claire Waring gives practical advice on housing a swarm Page 72

FREE VET ADVICE
INSIDE EVERY ISSUE
GET PEACE OF MIND
Why we all want to be self-sufficient
The COUNTRY SMALLHOLDER
July 2023
thecountrysmallholder.com
£4.99
LIVESTOCK SPECIAL
Micro pigs
Alpacas and the law
Eco-dairy diversity
DIY meat smoking
Tanning sheepkins
Swarming bees
Boer Goats
PLUS

This long-established magazine is published inside *The Country Smallholder* every month

41 Keeping chickens cool in hot weather
Simple ideas for better welfare when it warms up

42 From the Poultry Vet
Finally some good news about avian flu

46 Roost and Repeat
What your chicken does at night

52 Calming chickens with classical music
Some studies say that it really works and why

56 The British Hen Welfare Trust
Preventing and getting rid of ravenous red mite

58 Talking pure breed poultry
Telling a hard feathered breed from a soft feathered and why it matters

61 Protect your breeding hens with saddles
The type to choose, fitting and when they are needed

Front Cover Pic
Newly sheared alpacas enjoying the Summer.
Credit Bozedown Alpacas

SIGN UP FOR MORE!

thecountrysmallholder.com

Next Issue

August 2023 is on sale 20th July

IMPROVING YOUR ODDS OF

SUMMER SUCCESS

HOUSE RULES OF THE COUNTRY CASINO
Improving Your Odds of Summer Success
DATAMARS
Livestock

Improve your odds of Summer success and maximise your flock returns as the season unfolds with some of our eBook insights.

Scan the QR code for your FREE eBook today!

VISIT US AT **KIWIKITROXAN.CO.UK**

KiwiKit ROXAN » DATAMARS Livestock

Health-check Britain's hedgerows this summer

Wildlife enthusiasts needed to join the Great British Hedgerow Survey and survey local hedgerows, which is vital for their ongoing conservation

Hedgerow survey season is here, and wildlife charity People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) is looking for volunteers in all corners of the UK to take part in its *Great British Hedgerow Survey*.

Between now until October volunteers are encouraged to health-check their local hedgerows by filling in PTES' simple survey form. Key features of their chosen hedge are recorded, such as the height, width, structure, and what tree species are present.

The data gathered provides instant feedback about how healthy the hedgerow is and offers bespoke management advice. When volunteers work in collaboration with farmers and/or landowners, this advice can be passed to those that directly manage the hedgerows, ensuring they are sensitively managed so they can thrive for many years to come.

Hedges encourage biodiversity like this male yellowhammer perching in a Norfolk hedge

The results also enable PTES' conservationists to build a nationwide picture of Britain's hedgerow health and how it's changing over time. And, by understanding their current structure, condition and key features, PTES can start to implement targeted, data driven conservation (alongside the work the charity already does with landowners and the farming community), which is crucial to ensure this iconic and important habitat is preserved.

The Great British Hedgerow Survey is primarily aimed at wildlife enthusiasts, landowners, Wildlife Trusts and other groups, but anyone with a passion for preserving native habitats and the countless species they support can take part.

PTES offers free survey training to groups and there is also advice available online.

Megan Gimber, Key Habitats Officer, PTES says: "The value of healthy hedgerows cannot be overstated; they provide a lifeline for so much wildlife (from hedgehogs and dormice to birds and butterflies), as well as many rare and threatened species. They are a home, provide food, act as safe corridors for wildlife travel across the countryside and the way they are managed has a huge impact on their ecological value."

"About half of the UK's hedgerows were lost in the last century through incentivised removal, and although the rate of this decline has slowed significantly, it's important that what we've got left is in good condition. After all, the hedgerows that remain today are "the single most important ecological building block left in this country" to quote George Eustice, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs."

To take part in the Great British Hedgerow Survey or to find out more about PTES' hedgerow conservation work, visit: *hedgerowsurvey.ptes.org*

Village blooms with pride in their history

Volunteers in the Benwick Street Pride / In Bloom group are continuing to create special moments for all around the village with recently completed projects and more on the horizon.

The group has completed enhancements to the Second World War pillbox alongside the Old River Nene, clearing the area up and installing a soldier silhouette and 'lest we forget' plaque on its walls.

A new planter with a memorial rose at its centre has been installed opposite the St Mary's closed church yard.

LEST WE FORGET

Transformation of Second World War pillbox adds to Benwick in Bloom achievements.

In addition, a fence featuring chickens, pigs and sheep has been placed in front of 'The Pound' in Benwick High Street where stray animals would have been impounded in medieval times.

A £1,457 grant from the Burnthouse Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund funded the projects along with a contribution to the fence from Benwick Parish Council.

And now the group is working to create a stumpery at the old church yard, which takes inspiration from the Victorian tradition of growing ferns among upturned tree stumps. The stumpery will commemorate the coronation of King Charles III, who has one at his private residence Highgrove House. Ransonmoor Community Fund has contributed £600 to the scheme.

Fenland District Council provides a coordinating role for Street Pride groups across the district.

Have you been affected by the impact of bovine tuberculosis (bTb) on your herd?

A National charity would like to hear from you

New research by national charity The Farming Community Network (FCN) seeks to better understand the impact of bovine tuberculosis (bTB) on UK farmers' health and wellbeing.

The study is exploring the emotional, financial and physical impacts of bTB and the long-term ramifications these may have had on the farmer, farm family or farm business.

The researchers are also hoping to hear about farmers' experiences of government policies to control and eradicate bTB.

As part of the research FCN is running a survey that will help the charity to better understand how farmers and farm families perceive the threat of bTB – helping to improve its support to those at risk or affected by a bTB breakdown.

- The survey, which is open for responses until mid-August, is available here: *https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/3HG5YFG*
- A Welsh-language version of the survey is available here: *https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/5NW7D8V*
- or click through on their website *fcn.org.uk*

It should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

Farmers who have experienced a bTB breakdown are being encouraged to fill the survey in and to share their experiences.

The charity is also inviting those who fill in the survey to take part in an optional longer-form interview from September onwards.

Dr Jude McCann, Chief Executive Officer, The Farming Community Network, said: "We know all too well the devastating impact bTB can have on farms in the UK. The anxiety associated with bTB testing, and the unfortunate outcome when a bTB breakdown does occur, can cause irreversible damage to a farm business and can significantly impact the health and wellbeing of farming families.

"We hope this study will help to shed light on this issue, provide farmers with the opportunity to share their own experiences with bTB, and help FCN and the agencies we work with to better support farmers affected."

The study follows a report in 2009 conducted by FCN (Stress and Loss – a report on the impact of Bovine TB on farming families). This included interviews with 68 livestock farmers in the bTB hotspot areas of South West England, and eastern Wales.

The findings highlighted the serious and widespread impact of bTB on farmers and demonstrated that this impact commonly extended across all family members as evidenced in their psychological and physical health, as well as in their overall financial and social wellbeing.

FCN say please pass this survey on to friends and family you think might want to take part.

The Farming Community Network (FCN) is a voluntary organisation and charity that supports farmers and families within the farming community through difficult times.

In addition to local groups of volunteers, FCN runs a confidential national helpline (03000 111 999, open 7am-11pm every day of the year) and e-helpline (*help@fcn.org.uk*)

Tell FCN how you feel about bTB and your herd

Surveying the loss of local abattoirs

Closures badly impact farm and restaurant businesses, animal welfare, local economies and the environment

A survey of more than 1,300 farming and food businesses across the UK has found that local abattoirs are a vital service, with 88% of respondents stating their closest abattoir is either essential or important to the success of their business, while 64% feel the availability, or lack of availability, of a local abattoir impacted their future business plans.

The survey, carried out by the Sustainable Food Trust and National Craft Butchers, highlighted the many benefits small and local abattoirs can bring, with respondents ranking animal welfare, the local economy and the environment as chief amongst these.

The survey found that the loss of small abattoirs, at a rate of 10% per year, according to the Food Standards Agency, has left abattoir customers reliant on only a handful of remaining operators, creating a fragile system that is vulnerable to collapse. Journey times have increased significantly, with some animals now travelling more than 200 miles to slaughter. Respondents also reported that many remaining smaller abattoirs are increasingly busy and difficult to book into. These factors have forced some businesses to close or limit their operations.

Remote and island communities have been particularly affected. One farmer on Orkney said: "Since Orkney abattoir closed in 2018 the situation here is dire - most of the free-range rare breed pig farmers have closed down. The next nearest abattoir costs us over £250 just for the ferry taking a trailer that can hold max 20 sheep, then there is the 30-mile drive to the port and the 110 mile drive to Dingwall."

And a number of respondents were very clear that their business was entirely dependent on their local abattoir. Smallholders producing specialist breeds of meat are particularly affected. One respondent said: "If this one closed, we would lose our business," and another said, "We are very lucky but if it shut, I would have to stop livestock farming as the nearest would be too far away."

More than 30 respondents used an abattoir which has closed down since the survey was conducted. One customer of Tottingworth abattoir, which closed last year, said: "Without a local abattoir a major part of our local livestock sales will disappear. In the South-East there are so few abattoirs left that losing any more would prevent sales and increase food miles."

The survey showed that farmers and food businesses are keen to find solutions, with 64% saying they would be interested in cooperative-owned abattoirs and 81% expressing an interest in mobile abattoirs, with 73% saying they would pay more for this service. There was also interest in doing more with their products, as 33% said they would collect the hides and skins if they had access to further processing facilities.

The Abattoir Users Survey was a UK-wide survey conducted by the Sustainable Food Trust and National Craft Butchers between the 16th August and 22nd September 2022. Please follow the link to read the full report: *https://sustainablefoodtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Final_abattoir_users_survey_web.pdf*

Local and specialist food businesses are also impacted by small abbatoir closures

Can My Goat Dairy Be Eco-Friendly?

Tamsin Cooper finds greener ways to manage productive goats

Goats access areas other animals and machinery find difficult to clear

Goats have a reputation for being destructive and difficult to contain, but can they simultaneously encourage biodiversity while remaining productive?

Provided that the right animals are managed in an environmentally sensitive manner, regenerative farmers have already shown that they can.

HOW GOATS CAN HELP REGENERATION

For the soil to regenerate it needs a wide variety of plants, microbes, fungi, and insects. A balanced variety of native plants will encourage this healthy renewal and provide habitats and food for wildlife. When pastures are overstocked with grazing animals or when fields are sown with monocultures, this diversity is lost. However, a balance can be restored in time with the introduction of native plants and trees, while grassland can be kept open with carefully controlled light grazing.

Goats perform best when part of a system of complementary grazers in a mixed species environment with plenty of varied vegetation. Goats are particularly skilled at removing undergrowth in hard-to-access locations where other grazers and machinery cannot reach. They much prefer trees, shrubs, weeds and tall grasses to meadow grass, and thrive on variety. Whereas sheep and cattle will graze the sward, goats tend to browse around the paddock edges, snaffling brambles, gorse, nettles, thistles, and other spiky, thorny, or woody plants. Each plant becomes appetising to goats at a certain time of year. Goats are therefore useful for preventing the creep of brambles and other encroaching weeds into the field.

However, a goat herd kept in just one field will ravage all the weeds, undergrowth, and trees that they can reach within the first year of occupancy, and you will be left with long grass, bracken (which they barely eat and is poisonous in quantity), trees stripped of bark, and a tired pasture. The secret is to keep the goats moving on a scheduled rotation to allow the plants to recover. Rotation also helps goats to avoid eating pasture with parasite larvae that would lead to gastrointestinal worms. This natural parasite control is much gentler on the environment, as pharmaceutical wormers also kill creatures that are beneficial to the soil.

PASTURE ROTATION

Depending on your land and means, there are different options for pasture rotation. The aim is to leave each paddock to recover for at least two months (the longer the better). Some herds remain in a large pasture for up to three weeks, while others are moved through smaller paddocks or strips every one to three days. During winter, goats can even manage woodland, clearing the undergrowth, provided that you move them on before new growth in spring. Be careful to choose goats who do not strip bark. Most billies do, but nanny-goats vary widely in this behaviour.

You will need strong stock fencing, at least at the pasture boundaries. For temporary internal division of pastures, four to five electric strands on fibreglass posts are ideal. These have the advantage of being easily and quickly set up and dismantled as the herd moves to fresh pasture. Insulated clips or reels can be

Goats favour the field borders, discouraging undergrowth from invading the sward

Goats find value in weeds that other species ignore

Goats adore brambles and can be moved to different locations with portable electric fencing

Nettles are high in protein and goats sense when they just right for browsing

used to attach the electric strands to a permanent stock fence. Alternatively, an electric net can be used. This is easy to set up and move, but tends to short out on longer vegetation. A solar panel and integrated battery charger make the whole kit more portable and eco-friendly.

People are often concerned that horned goats will get caught in electric fencing. With most goats, this is easily avoided through training. Goats learn quickly from observation. If your goats trust you, you can demonstrate to them that the fence hurts by pretending to receive a shock when you touch it. Put on your best ham acting skills and they'll believe you. Water and shelter must always be available, and a mobile shelter can suit a small herd.

Goats know how to pluck the highly nutritious parts of gorse

Combining or alternating with cattle, sheep or horses will make the most of your resources. Goats do not compete with these other species for food, so they do not add much to cattle or sheep stocking density. In fact, goats clear the scrub, granting your other animals access to grass. In addition, goats do not share the same worm species as cattle and horses, so the herbivores act in concert to clear the pastures of each other's parasite larvae. However, be careful not to stock sheep highly, as goats are very susceptible to sheep worms.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT GOATS

Goats are highly individual beings with a range of skills and habits. For pasture management and for low-input farming (where costs are kept low for a moderate yield), goats need to be good foragers, hardy and adaptable. However, modern high-yielding goats have lost some degree of survival skills through commercial breeding and management techniques.

Firstly, goats bred for high yield do not have the body resources to also have high immunity and rugged physiques. Goats with large udders are easily injured when exploring spiky thickets. On the other hand, old breeds were expected to provide for themselves, survive harsh weather, and raise their own kids. Goat keepers who use goats for pasture management tend to choose old breeds, such as Bagot, Golden Guernsey, English, Old English and Pygmy goats. These are hardier, more resistant to rainfall, and better adapted to the British climate.

Secondly, the environment a goat grew up in is preparation for their habits as an adult. Kids raised in barns where all food is supplied do not learn to forage and protect themselves, as they would free-ranging at their mother's side. Kids learn a lot from their mother and other adult goats during their first few months. Dam-raised kids in a foraging herd will already have a much higher repertoire of plant knowledge than artificially-raised kids. They will know how to balance their diet, what to avoid, and how to access the nutritious parts of those woody, spiky weeds.

Many goats strip bark and nibble buds, so young trees need protection

A high variety of pasture plants gives a healthy nutritious diet

PICTURE CREDIT: OLD ENGLISH GOAT SOCIETY

Eleri Pugh, OEGS Secretary at Temple Farm, Devon, milking an Old English nanny goat

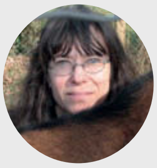
PICTURE CREDIT: RUTH DALTON

Ruth Dalton's Golden Guernseys who manage the pastures of Whinpot Farm, Cumbria

Finally, any animal that has multiple roles will reduce the carbon footprint of your activity. If your goat can provide food and environmental services, she will save you having to engage in further activities. If you eat meat, there is less waste if you consume your excess dairy stock, rather than breeding separate meat animals. Hardy dual-purpose breeds, although more moderate in output, tend to produce for longer. They are more eco-friendly all round.

In addition, if you can meet all your animals' needs and compost any waste on site, this is highly beneficial to the environment: less waste, less industrial processing, less transport. As nettles and gorse can provide high protein levels for lactating animals, good foragers can find enough nutrition for their reproductive needs in nature.

ALL ABOUT TAMSIN COOPER



Tamsin Cooper is a smallholder in north-west France, where she keeps and writes about goats. She follows the latest research in animal behaviour and welfare, and has mentored on online courses.

DAIRY IN A HEALTHY ECOLOGY

Dairying practice has traditionally used specially bred dairy animals, at least since the early 1900s. We have long believed that these are the only goats to keep on the smallholding. However, those of us just wanting milk and cheese for the family have small requirements. I find that more than one Alpine produces too much to process without investing in freezer space. When you add the extra complications that dairy goats can suffer with healthcare, kidding complications, extra feed, foot rot, and worms, it is actually a relief to have hardy animals that need very little care or vet bills. The more moderate yield of a Golden Guernsey, English or Old English goat is more manageable, and gives you the opportunity to put a couple of nannies in kid at the same time; it is so much healthier for the kids to have companions to grow up and play with. Like dairy breeds, dual-purpose breeds have the potential for a long lactation. In this case, yearly yield remains comparable without needing to kid every year, thus saving on time and expenses.

Even with old breeds, be picky about your new herd. Some herds are not frequently handled, so are shy with people. This is often the case with Bagot goats. In fact, Bagot and Pygmy do not generally produce any more milk than is required for their kids.

Among the dual-purpose breeds, there are individual differences, depending on the foundation of the lines and the preferences of the breeder. While Golden Guernseys can provide three pints per day, there are many who produce less. There will always be a pay off between productivity and hardiness. If you want sturdier, tougher goats on your terrain, you will need to compromise on milkiness, so that your goats thrive and continue to produce when conditions are harsh. English goats may be a suitable compromise between the ancient landrace and a modern dairy goat. Old English have untapped potential of up to three pints per day at peak lactation, while remaining perfectly in harmony with their homeland's ecology, both in physique and behaviour.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Pasture for Life (www.pastureforlife.org)
- PfL Webinar – The Value of Native Breed Goats in a PfL Grazing System *(https://youtu.be/ImT1IsF1zu4)*
- Temple Farm, Devon (templefarm.uk)
- Whinpot Farm, Kendal *(www.ruthdalton.co.uk)*

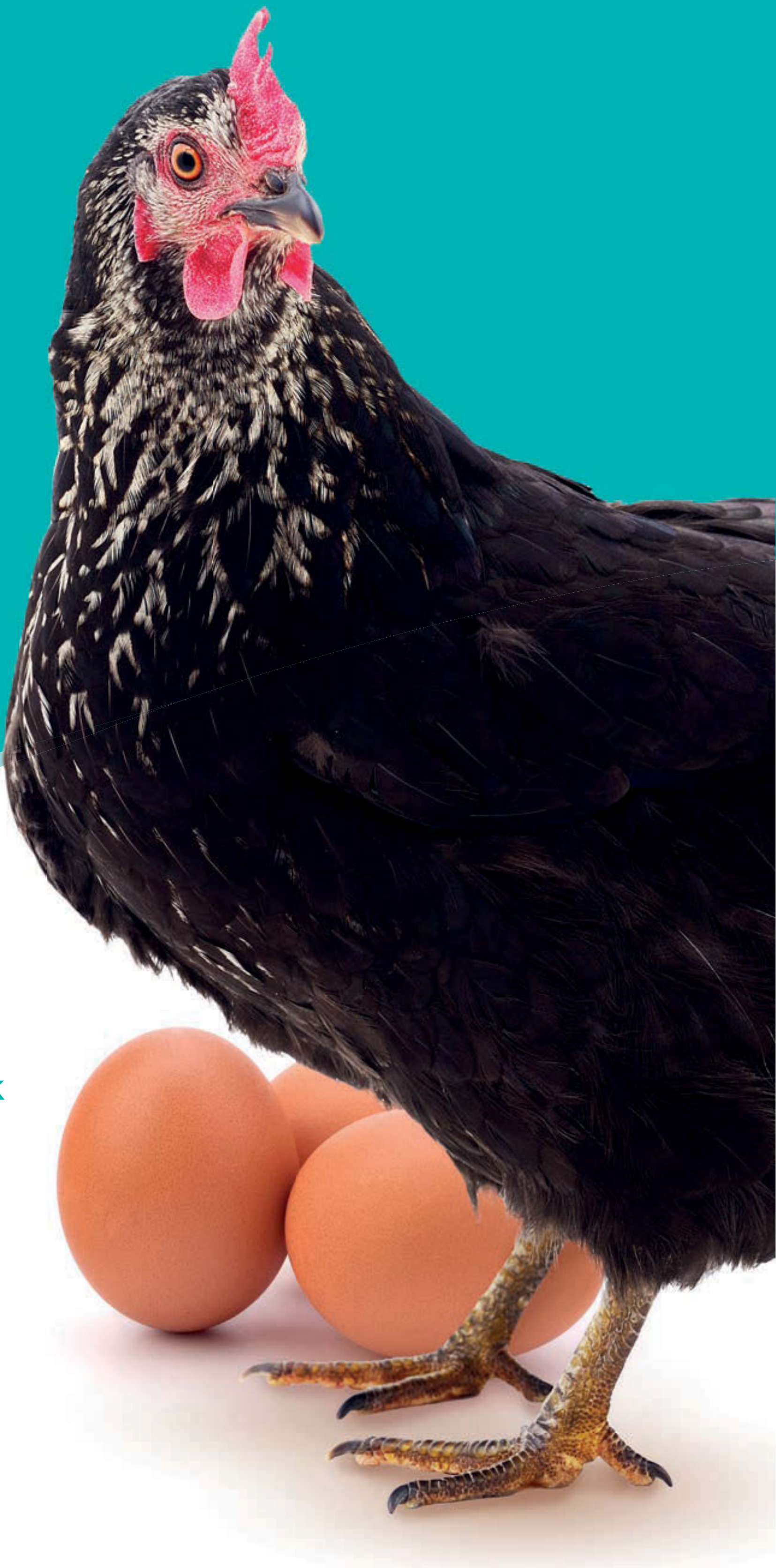
farmgate

Super Omega Mash, exclusively from Farmgate

Scan here for more information

- Helps lower saturated fatty acid
- Increases poly unsaturated fatty acids

All delivering you the perfect egg



Find your nearest farmgate stockist here:
www.farmgate-stockists.co.uk
or call us today for advice on feeding and care: **0330 678 1188**
www.farmgatefeeds.co.uk

for farmers
the *total* feed business

The fleeces we are sent contain memories, love, pride, and a whole host of other emotions and these, we hope, become embedded in the rugs we make

From Fleece to Floor

Jack Smellie explains the process of turning newly shorn fleece into fibre for rug making

One of the first lessons we learnt at the beginning of our rug-making business is that fibre, and all its associated paraphernalia, takes up a HUGE amount of room. This was not an easy realisation, as we are also avid readers, and so with spare bedroom number one already a library, we made the 'guilty' decision to turn spare bedroom number two into a fibre room. Our overnight guests were few and far between (and are even less now)!

The second lesson was the importance of labelling, especially other people's fibre. When we are sent fleeces to turn into rugs we are not just being sent 'fleeces', we are sent memories, love, pride, and a whole host of other emotions; and the resulting rugs, which should last a lifetime, then have all those emotions embedded in them. This of course makes the entire process a little scary and daunting, and each time we send a rug back to its owner, it is always with the words: 'oh my goodness, I do hope they like it'!

In so many ways, all this is no different to serving up a joint of beef or a leg of lamb. The time, energy, and emotional investment that smallholders put into raising their animals pretty much always means that we really hope/ need to love the final product, whether we are eating it, walking on it, sitting on it, or simply looking at it!

And that is the third lesson we learnt – not that this one needed much learning - that of valuing every single fleece that comes our way and realising the animals' importance to their owner: from the pet sheep that are treated more like dogs to the alpaca who has just given its last fleece. Our most moving commission to date was being given several fleeces from a lady who had just lost her husband. The plan had always been to commission a 'his and hers' rug for each side of their bed and when we met up to collect the fleeces, she asked us to go ahead and still make the two rugs!! Not a commission we will ever forget and yes, tears were shed!

SO HOW DO WE START TO MAKE OUR RUGS?

What follows isn't a step-by-step guide, rather an account of constantly evolving ideas and systems that have worked (or not worked) for us.

First up: washing the fleece. There are many suggested ways to wash a fleece. People write whole books about it, post endless videos, and engage in (usually) healthy social media debates. There is also the question as to whether you should even wash the fleece before starting to process it. We can say that after a few experiments, we always now do so.

For most of the time, our approach is simple: we soak the fibre in cold or luke-warm water with a splash of Ecover

Sorting fleeces after shearing – the contents of the wheelbarrow (the rejected bits) all go on our compost heap!

The sorted fleeces on their way to the house to be stored in our fibre room (ex-spare bedroom no. 2!)

Fleeces stored and labelled, and the shelf plan updated!! (shelving from Big Dug)

We use old cow mineral buckets for washing our fleeces using water from our own borehole, they are a perfect size

wool wash and Indian soap nuts, agitate a bit, rinse and then dry. Indian soap nuts are a surfactant which means they help to reduce the surface tension of the water, allowing the water and detergents to really get into the smaller parts of the fibre. In other words, they more effectively wet it, sometimes we leave the fibre soaking overnight to encourage more dirt to be 'drawn out'.

A massive game changer for us was the inclusion of a 'White Knight' into the drying part of the process. A White Knight is a compact, vertical spin dryer that crucially, only spins in one direction, and so avoids the risk of felting. After a minute in so inside, most fleeces feel almost dry which in the winter is a huge plus. We always finish off our drying by putting the fibre in herb/laundry drying racks which we then hang up. There is something delicious about smelling fibre that has dried in the sunshine, but in the real world we do have to resort to inside drying due to weather or time of year. Hanging the racks by our wood burner doesn't impress the dogs at all, but it does get the job done!!

LANOLIN CONTENT IN SHEEP WOOL IS USUALLY A MINUMUM OF 20%

VM stands for vegetable matter and is made of the organic(and sometimes non-organic) detritus that all fleeces contain.

The only way NOT to have VM in your fleece is for your animals to live in a totally sterile environment (never going to happen). Sheep wool is far worse for VM than alpacas due to the sticky lanolin and also because the fleece itself is much more of a 'whole' entity. Each individual piece of wool fibre is covered in scales that hold all the fibres together and so dirt is more easily trapped between them. This is also why sheep wool felts so easily because heat, moisture and agitation will cause these scales to fuse together – a process that is NOT reversible. Felting, on purpose, is fabulous, allowing people far more talented than me, to create 2D and 3D art, simply by allowing this fusion to take place (through needle felting, wet felting etc). Felting by accident, can, on the other hand, ruin perfectly good wool.

Also, one of our biggest discoveries was how much lanolin there is in a sheep fleece. A commercial mill will tell you that if you send off several fleeces, a loss of less than 20% probably means the wool has not been washed properly, because at least a fifth of most fleeces will be made up of lanolin. And by the time VM and 'unusable' wool has been removed, you will be looking at another 10% to 20% loss. 10kg of fleece therefore, becomes just 6kg to 7kg of workable fibre. If you send your wool to be processed into rovings, batts or to be spun, it is usual to pay per kg on the 'incoming weight', meaning it is essential to remove as much of the 'rubbish' from your fleece as possible to maximise the final price per kilo.

'Home washing' losses need not be as high, depending on the planned use of the fibre. Certainly for our rug making, we like to use every last piece of fibre we can because our rugs are fluffy and rustic and both short and long fibres, curls and non-curls, blanket and non-blanket etc all have their place. I also quite like a bit of lanolin to be left when I spin as I find it holds my thick, chunky yarn together better.

Alpaca fibre of course contains no lanolin and so the weight pre and post washing is much closer. Our biggest loss to date has been around 10% and that was due to the huge amount of Peak District grit those particular alpacas liked to roll in!!

If your sheep and alpacas have lived as natural a life as possible, in fields, shelters, hedgerows and woods, their fleeces will contain VM. If you provide hay racks, dust baths for your alpacas, straw (or similar) beds for lambing etc, your fleeces will contain VM. Quite a lot of VM does naturally fall out and at the point of shearing, it is important to do all you can to minimise more VM finding its way in. Making your animals wait on clean grass or hard standing and having clean boards and (slotted) sorting tables will all help, as will packing the fleeces in bags (paper) or boxes immediately after shearing.

At every point of our rug making process, we find and remove VM. We pick out as much as we can before washing, more is then lost in the washing/drying process. Some 'flies out' as we spin and if there are still bits left as we weave, yet more will fall out then too. When we finish a rug, we always do the 'bare feet' test: a gentle walk up and down to make sure there are no nasty 'prickles' still lurking.

Back to our washed fibre.... Next up, how we spin it - another minefield of endless possibilities and debate – and then begin to weave... Tune in next time...

If you would like to find out more about our rug making and rug commissions, please look us up at "http://www.relaxedathome.org.uk/rugs_fibre.php" www.relaxedathome.org.uk/rugs_fibre.php

Herb/ laundry racks make fabulous drying racks for fibre, especially when they can be hung in the sunshine

Donna Gillies, with some of her Hebridean sheep

Fleece by:
NELLIE

Provenance is everything

Highland Wool Birth of a mini-mill

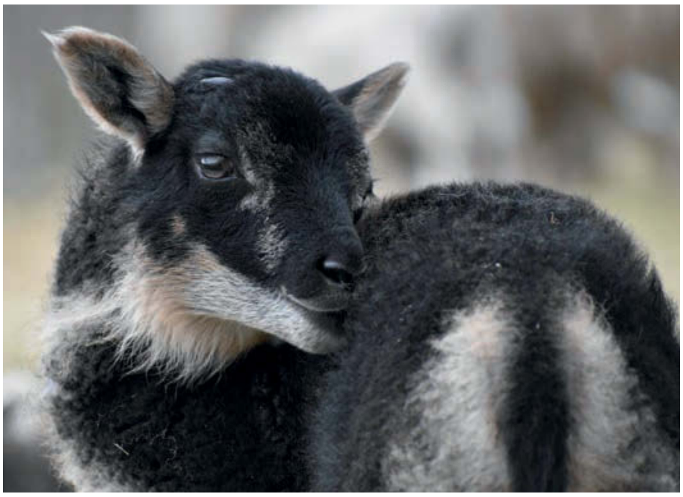
A sheep keeper's answer to processing her fleeces

When Donna Gillies found it difficult to get the fleece from her Hebridean sheep processed (and impossible to get it processed locally), she didn't just sit and moan about it – she decided to set up a fleece processing mini-mill at the smallholding she shares with her husband, Donald, near Ardgay in Sutherland.

Donna's not a lifetime farmer, having had a successful career in the arts, and she's used to making things happen.

The Hirsel, the home now of Highland Wool CIC, is a family croft located in Sutherland, the second most Northerly county in mainland Scotland. Located in an area of outstanding natural beauty, the Hirsel enjoys stunning views across the farm to the Dornoch Firth. As well as Hebridean sheep, Donald and Donna raise rare breed pigs and Scots Dumpy poultry using regenerative and sustainable practices – old and new – to bring the family farm back from 30 years of neglect.

Highland Wool aims to support small-scale producers



Shetland sheep are renowned for their quality fleece

But it's wool that's taking centre stage at The Hirsel now. Along with three other Directors, all bringing skills and knowledge to the table, Donna has started to bring her project to life.

Highland Wool CIC was formed as a Community Interest Company (CIC) to support a sustainable wool industry in Scotland. Although there are around seven million sheep in Scotland, here are very few vertical (fleece to fibre) wool mills and none in the Highlands.

Highland Wool is about creating infrastructure, but also about building a community linking farmers and crofters with artists, crafters and manufacturers and, importantly, supporting the developments of sustainable wool products that can boast a provenance of "100% Made in Scotland".

Work is underway on a six month pilot project that will initially take fleece to carded batts, allowing Donna to gather information about the proposed processing methods, water recycling, energy use, and capacity, as well as building skills and support, and putting the business plan together.

Alterations to buildings and the purchase and installation of equipment are underway – with Donald, en experienced engineer, learning the technical aspects of the operation. Donna hopes to be able to take small commissions towards the end of 2023.

You can follow the progress of the project here https://www.highlandwool.scot/ and life at The Hirsel here https://thehirsel.com/

Smallholding and small farm insurance

ASTONLARK
A howden company

Down-to-earth personal service

At Aston Lark, we simplify customers' lives, providing straightforward, swift solutions with a personal touch.

And we're on fertile ground when it comes to supporting smallholders and farmers.

Whether you just have a few animals or operate a larger agricultural business, our expert team can advise on the best farm insurance for you.

Our coverage includes:

- Agricultural Vehicle and Tractor Insurance
- Farm Contents and Agricultural Building Insurance
- Home Insurance (Building & Contents)
- Livestock Insurance
- Landowners Liability
- Public and Product Liability
- Employer's Liability

Call to find out more on: **0330 016 2012** or visit **www.astonlark.com/smallholdingsfarminsurance**

feefo
★★★★★
4.8/5 average customer experience rating on Feefo
as of 31st May 2023

Aston Lark Limited is registered in England and Wales, No. 02831010.
Registered office: One Creechurch Place, London, United Kingdom, EC3A 5AF.
Aston Lark Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, No. 307663.

ACRES OF EXPERIENCE

www.astonlark.com

AL-CS-SH-002-0623

Chartered Insurance Brokers

3 crias - 2 Suri and a Huacaya

Alpacas - Identification and Record keeping

Joy Whitehead explores what you must do, what you might do and what you should do!

In a small alpaca herd ear tags may not be considered necessary, as these animals have very individual personalities, and/or can be differentiated by colour, markings for example. However in a larger herd it becomes more important, for example for administering medications, to ensure that the correct animal receives the right treatment. Record keeping is an essential tool in any herd.

EAR TAGS AND MICROCHIPS

There is no legal requirement in the UK for alpacas to have ear tags. However, when an alpaca cria is born at Bozedown Alpacas we take a very small temporary ear tag, write (with a permanent parker) the dam's ear tag number on it, and insert into either the left ear for a female, or the right ear for a male cria. Thus if a cria gets separated from its mother for any reason we can still easily identify it. We also weigh the cria using a spring balance and sling and record the tag number and birth weight which is later transferred onto a new animal record which we create on our herd management software programme, Herdmaster.

> "Record keeping is an essential tool in any herd.

Each cria is weighed every day for its first week of life, then weekly for the first month, and then monthly until weaning. This is to reassure us that the cria is getting enough milk and is thriving. After weaning it will be weighed weekly until we are sure it is still growing on well. All these records are transferred onto Herdmaster, so that we have reference points if an animal loses weight or becomes unwell. While weighing the youngsters we will also be checking body condition scores of each one and, as the alpaca grows on, regular body condition scoring takes over from weighing in the main. All this information is also transferred to the computer programme.

Each alpaca needs to have a microchip inserted and be registered with the British Alpaca Society, thus acquiring a unique identification number, which includes the herd prefix, in our case BOZ. At weaning the cria will receive its permanent ear tag, with its own herd number. This ear tag will henceforth be our key to managing each individual alpaca. However, there is no BAS requirement for alpacas to wear ear tags.

ALPACA MOVEMENTS AND INSURANCE

There is currently no DEFRA requirement to record alpaca movements on or off the farm or around the country. However, we do record all these, and also any movements of alpacas between paddocks within the farm. This means that in the case of disease occurring we can very rapidly check for possible cross-contamination.

It is possible to insure alpacas individually, but with a big herd like Bozedown this cost would be prohibitive. They are however covered on our general farm policy.

MEDICATIONS

Annual Covexin 10 booster injections are given every January/February to protect the herd against Clostridial diseases, with the initial doses being given when the alpacas are about 3 months old. These all get recorded, as do the Vitamin A,D&E doses given regularly throughout the winter months when there is not much sunlight. These vitamins protect our alpacas against rickets. We also record any worming treatments and other medications prescribed by our vet. Some medication doses, including some worming treatments are dosed by weight and so we have an electronic digital platform weighing scale (see photo) to check alpaca weights, which also comes in useful for weighing fleeces.

FLEECE RECORDS

Shearing days are always very busy, as we shear about 80 alpacas per day. However it is essential for us to complete certain tasks for our records. Small fibre samples are taken from the mid-side point of each

Southern Sands
Alpacas

Southern Sands Alpacas

• PET MALES • STUD MALES • PREGNANT FEMALES

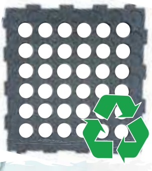
All available from the home of the British National Show Champion Suri 2023

Suri Armstrong
British National Show Champion 2023

• Training • Advice
• Sales • Herd planning
• Husbandry courses
• Stud services

SOUTHERN SANDS ALPACAS
Contact Ben on 07791 396986
or email
ben@southernsandalpacas.co.uk

A SLAB FOR ALL SEASONS



JUNE & JULY SPECIAL
£1 OFF
PER SQ METRE*

*OFFER VALID FOR ORDERS PAID FOR IN JUNE & JULY / PRICE IS +VAT & DELIVERY

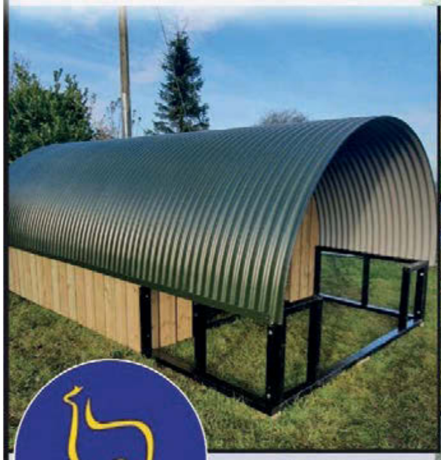
A SOLID FOUNDATION, WHATEVER THE WEATHER

Act now and control mud forever • 100% recycled heavy plastic
Solid, interlinking slabs create instant hardstanding
Immediately transforms and protects the ground beneath
Create access, yards and parking exactly where you need them
Base & sub-base in one, removable and reusable

DON'T BURY YOUR INVESTMENT WITH CONCRETE, USE THE ECO, CARBON-FRIENDLY ALTERNATIVE

FOR REVIEWS & TESTIMONIALS, FIND US ON FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE
WWW.MUDCONTROL.CO.UK
SALES@MUDCONTROL.CO.UK / TEL: 01536 669630

Alpaca Pods, Llama Pods
& Livestock Mobile Field Shelters



The British Alpaca Society

Why use our Pods ?

Being an Alpaca breeder the Welfare of our animals is paramount so the pods are designed and manufactured by ourselves taking this into account. We designed the Alpaca pods for our own herd and are now pleased to offer these for sale.
Husbandry: They make a great area for carrying out your husbandry tasks such as feet trimming, vitamin drenches etc. we just place a hurdle at the entrance or make a catch pen in front of the pod. They can also be used as holding pens for quarantine areas.
Flies: They make a great shelter's in summer against the heat and offers a shelter against the flies. Our dark coloured Alpaca's particularly use the shelters when the flies are out.
Weather: They are design with adverse weather in mind, just place a field post at the corner of the prevailing wind and this will ensure the pods don't twist or move.
Ventilation: In the prevention of pneumonia ventilation is a very important factor for consideration, the pod is design with gaps all around the frame to give the alpacas enough ventilation even whilst in the cush position.
Adaptably: Easily adaptable you can add water corner drinkers and feeding troughs keeping them off the floor adding to good biosecurity measures for your alpaca herd. By placing two rubber mats on the floor you can deep bed the Alpaca pods in winter making a great dry bedding area for them to enjoy.
They can be moved to another area in a paddock or dismantled to erect somewhere further away.
Appearance: The Alpacas Pods are practical and attractive. We have supplied several Alpaca Pods within the National Parks and areas of conservation.
Size: We have found that always feeding the Alpacas in the pod they soon learn it is a nice place to be. We have a large range of pods available for various numbers.

If you would like any additional information please don't hesitate to **contact Maggie on mobile 07791 881556**
email sandhillsalpacas@aol.com | www.tockwithalpacas.com/

Smallholdings & Small Farms
Insurance Specialists

BUY ONLINE

Buy online or over the phone

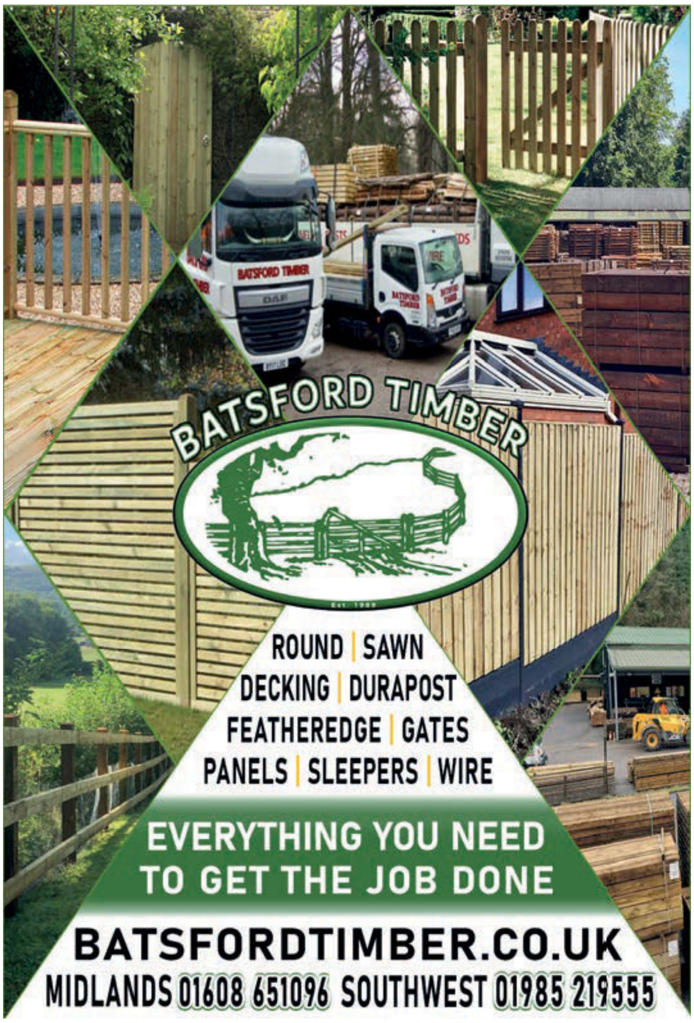
Our Smallholders insurance policy offers comprehensive protection for your smallholding or small farm, to include Property & Livestock, Machinery & Implements, Public & Product Liability, Employers' Liability and Environmental Liability, with the option to add cover for your Home Buildings and Contents.

Connect with us...
@GreenlandsIns

Visit **Greenlands.co.uk**
...or call on **01970 636 925**

GREENLANDS
INSURANCE SERVICES LTD

Authorised & regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority



BATSFORD TIMBER
Est. 1989

ROUND | SAWN
DECKING | DURAPOST
FEATHEREDGE | GATES
PANELS | SLEEPERS | WIRE

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO GET THE JOB DONE

BATSFORDTIMBER.CO.UK
MIDLANDS 01608 651096 SOUTHWEST 01985 219555

www.dyersmetalmesh.co.uk

Dyers Metal & Mesh

HOT DIPPED GALVANISED AVIARY MESH

Galv 36″ x 1″ x 1″ x 19g x 30m..........£69.95 each
Galv 36″ x 1/2″ x 1″ x 19g x 30m........£89.95 each
Galv 36″ x 1/2″ x 1/2″ x 19g x 30m.....£99.95 each
Galv 36″ x 1″ x 1″ x 16g x 30m.........£179.95 each
Galv 36″ x 1/4″ x 1/4″ x 22g x 30m...£135.95 each
Galv 48″ x 1/2″ x 1/2″ x 19g x 30m...£169.95 each
Galv 36″ x 3/4″ x 3/4″ x 16g x 30m...£194.95 each
Galv 36″ x 1/2″ x 1″ x 16g x 30m......£209.95 each
Galv 36″ x 1/2″ x 1/2″ x 16g x 15m...£139.95 each

THE PVC COATED IN GREEN OR BLACK.

Green 36″ x 1/2″ x 1″ x 17g x 30m ...£104.95 each
Green 36″ x 1/2″ x 1/2″ x 17g x 30m £159.95 each

Now available rolls cut to length

FREE DELIVERY

PRICES INCLUDE MESH, VAT AND DELIVERY FOR MAINLAND UK ONLY.

01935 479 230

7 Buckland Road, Yeovil,
Somerset, BA21 5EA

www.birdauctions.co.uk

White Peak Alpaca Farm

A little Gem in the Heart of Cheshire

ALPACAS FOR SALE...

Alpaca breeders for over 30 years.
We offer a wide variety of pedigree alpacas.

We are happy to discuss your requirements – Farm visits require an appointment

ALPACA SHOP... Extensive range of alpaca products
Needle felting, Spinning, Knitted Products, Crafting Equipment

Phone: 01565 872 012
Email: adrian@whitepeakalpacafarm.co.uk
Web: www.whitepeakalpacafarm.co.uk

> Vitamin A, D & E doses given regularly throughout the winter months

alpaca and labelled with the ear tag number ready for fibre analysis. The results of these are added to our computer records. Then as shearing progresses each fleece is recorded initially in our shearing book, with the date at the top of the page, and then each line has an alpaca's ear tag number alongside its blanket fleece weight, neck fleece weight and leg/ tummy/tail fleece weight and total weight.

BREEDING RECORDS

Every time we present a female to a stud male we record the reaction of the female, whether she mates, runs, rejects the stud (spits), or even if she sits down and then doesn't settle to the mating (which could mean she has a persistent hymen if she does this several times). After two successive rejections a week apart she then has an ultrasound scan, at two months since last mating date, to confirm the pregnancy, as we can actually see the foetus on the scan. Her ultrasound results are added to her file.

HERD EVALUATIONS

These are carried out and recorded across our entire herd twice every year. Each alpaca gets scored on conformation, teeth alignment, fibre characteristics, fibre length, consistency, density, leg coverage and secondary fibres and we include a fibre micron estimation at this time, for which we have found that the human eye is accurate to within half a micron! (A micron, or micrometre, is 1000th of a millimetre.)

Cria being weighed using electronic platform

Crias rushing off after weighing

Only assist birthing when necessary and when you know how!

HOW DO WE USE THE RECORDS?

We are constantly referring to our records for all manner of things. For example, didn't that dam also have a problem birth last year? Or did that other dam have a cria that didn't thrive last year? Or did another dam have problems feeding her cria? If we notice any recurring problems like this we can easily look back and it may mean that a particular dam always has the same problem. We can almost certainly manage the cria and make sure it grows on healthily, but the bigger question is 'do we really want to risk the occurrence of a particular problem down the generations when that problem might be genetic?'. The answer tends to be 'no', and so the dam would then be sold off as a non-breeding pet female. The same thing would happen to a female who mates many times before eventually getting pregnant. We expect a normal healthy well-functioning female to get pregnant on the first or second mating, unless she has been open for a year or more, or unless she is overweight, in which case it can take time to get her ovulation cycles back on track - this may take several exposures to the Stud.

Our herd records are our main tool in all our herd management. For example, we have a ready reference to compare progeny characteristics from a particular dam or a particular stud. We have discovered prepotency genetics in both Studs and breeding females - alpacas that will always make an improvement in the next generation over their mating partner. We obviously discover this trait much sooner in Studs than in females, as a Stud can cover several females in a season, whereas a female can only produce one cria per year. Hence our records are indispensable in regard to our breeding programme.

Joy Whitehead has been breeding and showing alpacas since 1989, with niece Mary-Jo Smith, a BAS certified judge, joining her in 2000. In South Oxfordshire they farm around 350 huacayas and suris from prizewinning pedigree bloodlines. For more information, check our web site, *http://www.bozedown-alpacas.co.uk*

Cost of Living Crisis: How we can grow back

Andrew Oldham shows how to take back some control of your food

Community gardening.

We're worse off than last year according to statistics. The cost of tomatoes, broccoli, carrots, lettuces, and cauliflowers are all on the rise, and even turnips cost more. We are amid the worst cost of living crisis within living memory. According to statistics we are each 80% worse off than last year when it comes to our supermarket bills. Even the biggest producer of chicken in the UK has seen a price rise of 450%-550% for energy usage and diet supplements, coop litter, disinfectants and veterinary costs were up as much as 20%. We haven't even touched on the average bag of chicken feed, since 2020, feed has risen by 50% in cost and is continuing to rise. Small to medium poultry businesses are closing and the cost of chicken will soon be the same as the cost of beef, and all that cost must be passed on. Everything though isn't doom and gloom; we have acres of land in the UK that aren't being used to the best of its ability from the countryside to urban areas. Public parks, brownfield sites, derelict green spaces are all going begging for use, even your windowsill. If we must weather this crisis, then we need to do so as a community. The fight back starts with us all. There are some easy steps to get growing.

LAND VS TIME POOR

Can you identify land in your area that could be used? Is your local councillor willing to help you and others? This may be part of your smallholding or maybe an unused area within your community. A big problem with taking on a new project, is time. I for one, like you, are pushed for time. We call this being time poor, unable to cultivate new land or new projects. This is why getting to know your community will help you. Getting together with neighbours means you can spread between you: workload, growing seed, planting, watering, and harvesting. If you all take a turn you can share skills, cook together, and grow together. If you live in a community where only gardens are available you can still turn this over to food production, working together to manage each other's gardens and taking a percentage of the crops. Growing in a modern urban space or growing whilst holding down a busy job means you must think outside the box and getting your community active is the first step. You can go it alone but remember that even in The Good Life, Tom and Barbara had Jerry and Margot!

WHAT TO GROW

Look at your supermarket bill. Potatoes are cheap in comparison but can still be grown in sacks in limited space. Courgettes are now breaking the bank but a couple of plants in a raised bed or pot will give you massive crops if well looked after. Bags of lettuce can become pots or windowsills of lettuces. Berries (including grapes, raspberries, and strawberries) have gone

Potatoes in sacks.

Courgettes in a raised bed.

First picking from the courgette bed.

through the roof pricewise yet can easily be grown in any garden; gooseberries are one of my favourites. Identify first what you want to eat from your supermarket. If you can grow it – grow it! You can't grow bananas, but you can grow apples, pears, quinces, and plums. Fruit trees come in two forms, in a pot or bare rooted (this is the cheaper option, but you will have to wait until winter to buy and plant them). Fruit can be trained against walls as cordons, espaliers, and fans, limiting the amount of space they grow in and more importantly can come on dwarf rootstocks so that they will happily grow in a small space. Even in rented property you can live a bit of the good life with blueberries, strawberries, and blackberries in pots.

If you are strapped for time or even new to community growing, look to perennial vegetables, such as, Jerusalem Artichokes, Sorrel, Daubentons Kale, Welsh Onions, Babington's Leek, Asparagus, Chives (and a myriad of other herbs) and Rhubarb. These perennial vegetables will just get bigger and better each year.

HOME FREEZING

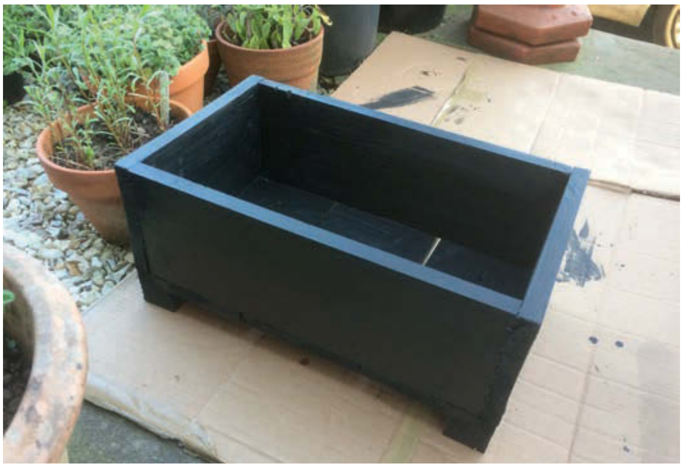
Peas and beans are a favourite of mine, at harvest time we have bucketloads of them and keeping them all year round is an easy task. Place the peas and beans in a boiling pan for around one minute and then quickly transfer to ice cold water, this stops the veg from going grey. Then the peas and beans are put on trays in the freezer for an hour and then bagged up. This stops them sticking together in the freezer. You can do this with cabbage, kale, chard, and spinach too. There are some crops that prefer to be left in open ground through the cold months, Jerusalem Artichokes and Parsnips are two - lift them when you need them to eat.

A SIMPLE PLANTER PROJECT FROM RECYCLED WOOD

What you need:
2 x 26cm long pieces of wood (15cm wide and 2cm thick)
2 x 40cm long pieces of wood (15cm wide and 2cm thick)
3 x 26 cm long pieces of wood (you can guess how wide and thick)
2 x 26cm long pieces of wood (5cm by 5cm - any square wood will do though)
Nails or screws.
A saw.
A tape measure.
A pencil.
A hammer.
A screwdriver.
A drill with a one cm drill bit.

Cut all your pieces of wood to size. Next, nail or screw the 26cm long pieces of wood to the longer 40cm pieces of wood. You want the shorter pieces of wood to be flush to the ends of the longer pieces of wood. When you have nailed all four sides together, flip the box over and use the three 26cm pieces of wood to make a base, there will be roughly a 5mm gap between the pieces of wood, this helps with drainage. It will also make the box sturdy. Next nail the 5cm x 26cm pieces of wood on the base too at each end, these are the feet of the planter and will help with drainage, stopping those drainage holes from getting clogged up. Protect your planter, you can use wood preservative, paint or even varnish. If you're worried about theft add heavy stones in the bottom, this will do several things: (1) it will provide drainage, (2) stop the planter from toppling over in high winds, and (3) give a hernia to anyone who tries to nick it. Then add compost and then sow seed. we have had cut and come again lettuce in ours and strawberries.

Lettuce in a planter.



The finished recycled planter.

GROWING IN LIMITED SPACE

I have grown everywhere from windowsills to acres of land, and each comes with their own challenges. When I had a yard in a rented property, I would grow salads and herbs in old tins and pots in an alleyway. None of them were ever stolen by anyone. What did happen was a ripple effect. My neighbours saw me growing and got in on the act and before too long we had commandeered the alley with the help of the council, gated it and started growing our own. If you have no outdoor space, you have a windowsill and windowsills are great for salads, herbs and even tomatoes. One friend of mine grew wonderful tomatoes at his mill workshop. He had vines that were 12 foot high growing in those large windows which were festooned with fruit.

There are plenty of ways to say, 'No' to growing your own but we have reached a crisis point where none of us can afford to say, 'No' anymore. Embrace your community, your forgotten and unloved spaces, and learn to grow with one another.

ALL ABOUT ANDREW OLDHAM

GMG AWARDS WINNER 2022

Andrew Oldham is a disabled gardener who believes in down-to-earth growing and cooking. He lives high on the Saddleworth hills with his wife, Carol, and son, D. Together they have created a quarter acre microholding called Pig Row which provides a wealth of rich flavours for the kitchen and larder. Life on Pig Row can be followed at *www.lifeonpigrow.co.uk*, on Instagram and Twitter @ *lifeonpigrow* and on Facebook *www.facebook.com/lifeonpigrow*

Hugh & Fiona with their homemade chilli sauces

Home Made Hot Sauce

Fiona and **Hugh Osborne** save money by making delicious hot sauces from home grown ingredients.

Fiona would describe herself as having an adventurous palate that enjoys flavour and spice. Hugh will never publicly admit to describing her as having “an asbestos gob” (except amongst friends)! What is undeniable though is that Fiona (and Hugh) enjoy using a variety of chilli sauces. As impoverished small holders this can present a financial issue. At the time of writing, one litre of “Tabasco sauce”, the most famous of hot sauces, costs well over thirty pounds at supermarket prices! Other hot sauces vary but none of them are cheap.

Given that we really enjoy growing chillies, we decided a few years ago to try making our own chilli sauces. Initial results were good but not great. Further research let us know that the great hot sauces are produced by fermentation. That sounded easy as we ferment plenty of country wine, but actually these sauces are made by lactic fermentation. In lactic fermentation, a variety of naturally occurring bacteria break down the chilli giving off carbon dioxide and acid. This fermentation needs to take place in a salty environment and anaerobically (without air being present). At the end of fermentation, a pH of around 3 is achieved which is acidic enough to preserve the food by pickling. That all sounded really complex, but we noticed that most people used super simple equipment, they found old jars and plastic bags were enough.

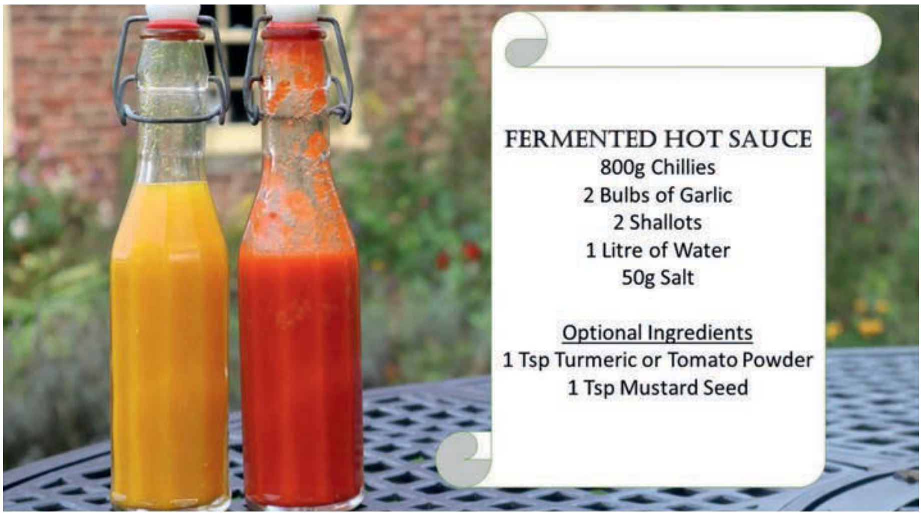
When we found out that the mysterious sounding “lactic fermentation” is the process that creates sauerkraut and even yoghurt we decided to have a go. It proved to be a ridiculously simple process and the resultant sauce was amazing. Over subsequent years we have refined our recipe and now produce sauces that we believe rival the finest commercial sauces. All for pennies!

THE INGREDIENTS

At its very simplest level we can make a fermented chilli sauce from chillies, salt and water. We add a few other ingredients, but it really can be as simple as you want it to be.

The one thing that we have found to be critical though is to grow our own chillies. The recipe calls for 800g of chillies (which is a lot to buy but easy to grow), however that isn’t the main reason. The main reason we find that making chilli sauce works best from home grown chillies is the availability

> **“When we found out that the mysterious sounding “lactic fermentation” is the process that creates sauerkraut and even yoghurt......**



FERMENTED HOT SAUCE

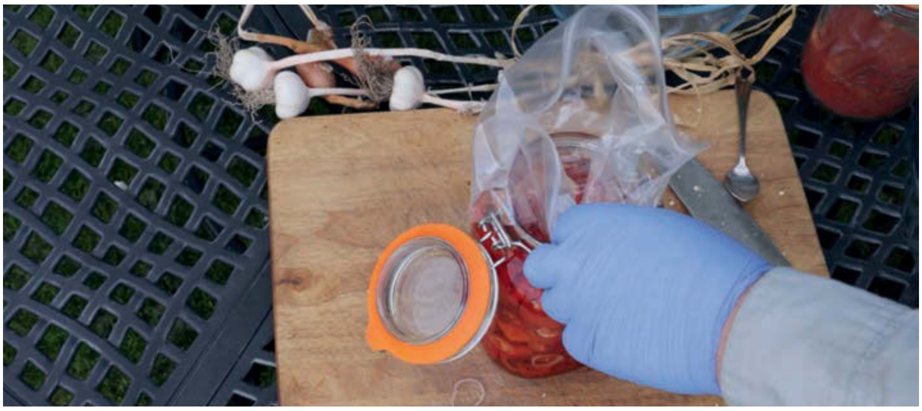
800g Chillies
2 Bulbs of Garlic
2 Shallots
1 Litre of Water
50g Salt

Optional Ingredients
1 Tsp Turmeric or Tomato Powder
1 Tsp Mustard Seed

Spectacular hot sauces can be made from easy to grow ingredients.

We think Ohnivec chillies are the best for flavour, heat and size.

A Kilner jar is great for fermenting hot sauce, but most large jars will work



A sealable plastic bag is great for keeping vegetables submerged.

> “We prefer the extra “twang” that a good vinegar gives the sauce

of interesting chilli varieties. We're sure there are exceptions but around here, there are very few varieties of chilli available to buy fresh. There are though a fantastic number of interesting varieties of chilli seeds that are available to buy. We have made incredible sauces from:

- Lemon Aji: A mild yellow chilli that really does taste of lemon.
- Ohnivec: A medium chilli that is very large and a reliable cropper.
- Scotch Bonnet: A hot chilli renowned in Caribbean cookery

We also grow the garlic, shallots and even the mustard seed for these recipes. We even make our own vinegar from the cider that we press, but that's a subject for another day.

FERMENTATION

Preparing the ingredients for fermentation is really straightforward and quick to do. We do this when our greenhouse is groaning under chillies and the garlic and shallots are ready, so normally we make our sauces in Summer and Autumn. To prepare the sauce firstly roughly chop 800g of chillies. We use nitrile gloves for this because that volume of chillies tends to impregnate the skin and, even after vigorous washing, a rub of the eye (or worse gents, touching a sensitive body part) can leave us in agony!

We also chop two full heads of garlic and two shallots and mix them with the chillies in a bowl. Optionally we sprinkle over a teaspoon of tomato powder where we use red chillies or turmeric where we use yellow chillies, and a teaspoon of whole mustard seed. We pack the chopped vegetables into a large glass jar with a lid, a Kilner jar is ideal for this. Then we dissolve 50g of table salt in a litre of tap water and pour this into the jar until the vegetables are covered.

It's important to keep the vegetables below the brine that you have created. There are glass weights available, but we have found nothing works any better than a sealable plastic bag (one of the Ziploc or “Pour and store” type), We push the open bag into the neck of the jar until all the chilli mixture is below the surface, then add leftover brine to the bag until the jar is full, seal the bag and put the lid on. The bacteria that breaks down the chilli occurs naturally and after a couple of days you should start seeing small bubbles beginning to rise through our mixture. These are the carbon dioxide given off by fermentation. If allowed to build up, this gas will pressurise the jar so it's important to open the jar each day to release that pressure. Releasing the pressure is amusingly known as “burping” our sauce. We were amazed the first time we made hot sauce how the smell developed over time. It started off as just “salty” but rapidly became spicy, fruity and mouth-watering. This gives a really good indication as to how the sauce is developing. For the fermentation to work well, the sauce needs to be warm (rather like fermenting wine) so jars of fermenting sauce replace the seedlings that occupied our sunny windowsills earlier in the year.

MAKING THE SAUCE

Eventually the sauce will have fermented out – we find that this takes at least two weeks. We can tell that fermentation is complete when no more gas bubbles rise when we unlatch the lid of our jar. At this point we strain off the brine from the vegetables. We then put the chillies and other vegetables into a liquidiser with a splash of home-made cider vinegar and blend them to a smooth paste. Once the blending is finished, we pass the sauce through a fine sieve to remove any vegetable pulp and leave only a smooth liquid. We have found that we need to press the pulp with the back of a spoon to work as much liquid out as possible. Time spent doing this increases both the quantity

Sieving gives a smooth, pourable sauce.

> **“Trust us here we do NOT want hot chilli sauce in our eyes**

and quality of the sauce, nothing but dry fibrous material should be left in the sieve.

Once the sauce is sieved, we adjust the consistency. This is a matter of personal taste, but we find that when blended and sieved it’s thicker than we would like. We prefer a sauce that isn’t completely liquid but that will pour from the bottle, something approaching the thickness of soup. To achieve this, we put the strained sauce into a saucepan and slowly add cider vinegar a little at a time until we get the consistency that we want. Some sauce makers will use the brine strained off earlier in the process to dilute their sauces. The salt has a preservative effect just as the vinegar does and it’s very much a matter of taste. We prefer the extra “twang” that a good vinegar gives the sauce. We once used a home-made elderberry vinegar made from our own elderberry wine. The results were amazing with a subtle fruity note. These sauces have very few ingredients so choosing interesting flavourful ingredients can yield delicious results.

After achieving the desired consistency, we bring the sauce up to a boil and gently simmer it for 5 minutes. This pasteurises the sauce. Not all sauce makers will do this, but we do it for two reasons.

1. If lactic fermentation is incomplete, pasteurisation will stop the process and prevent any further gas being given off potentially pressurising the bottles.
2. Pasteurising the sauce gives us confidence in extending the shelf life.

Whilst the sauce is simmering, we heat glass bottles in a pan of boiling water. This sterilises the bottles and also evens the temperature between bottles and sauce. Not doing so risks the bottles shattering!

We then carefully fill the warmed bottles with the sauce using a funnel. We do this carefully as there is a risk of air bubbles trapped in the funnel causing the sauce to erupt upwards. Trust us here we do NOT want hot chilli sauce in our eyes, so a pair of goggles is a sensible precaution especially because we tend to peer closely to not over fill each bottle. Once the bottles are full, they should be sealed tightly and allowed to cool. Our finished sauces will easily last a year if we have made enough.

Making sauces is one of our great pleasures. They preserve gluts of chillies really well, are a wonderful accompaniment to brighten up home cooked meals on dreary Winter days and are very welcome gifts for our lovely friends and neighbours as a “thank you” for all the kindness that they show us. Hugh also loves to experiment! In those exciting days of browsing seed catalogues, he usually finds an excuse to try a new chilli variety, these can lead to some wonderful sauces. We recently tried Chilhuacle Negro, an amazing dark brown chilli from Oaxaca Mexico. It’s horribly expensive to buy, but seeds are easily available. It’s a very mild chilli but has a sweet, smoky almost chocolatey flavour. That’s a sauce we really must make again.

We hope you give making a fermented sauce a try. The results are delicious and the process remarkably simple. There is a full video of the process on our YouTube channel if you would like to see more.

Be careful filling the bottles!

● Want to know more – talk to us on social media

The Hot Sauce Video
https://youtu.be/5fVd-7eaHWg

YouTube
https://www.youtube.com/EnglishcountryLife

Twitter
Smallholding *https://twitter.com/engcountrylife*

Chickens *https://twitter.com/TheFloofLady*

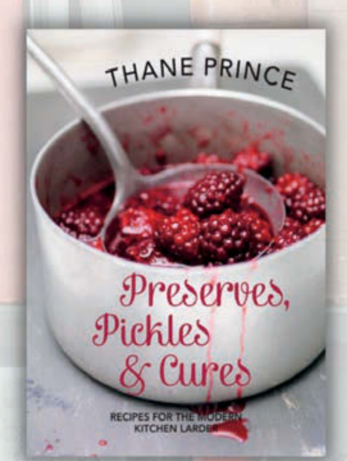
Instagram
Smallholding *https://www.instagram.com/engcountrylife/*

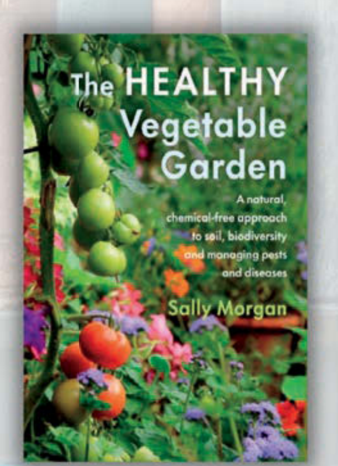
Chickens *https://www.instagram.com/theflooflady/*

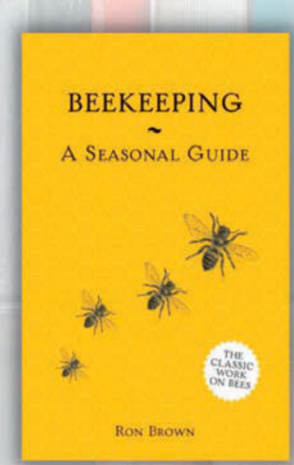
Over 120 books to choose from

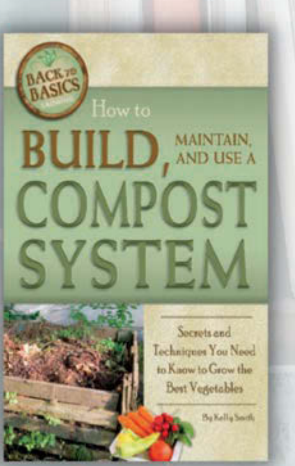
The COUNTRY SMALLHOLDER

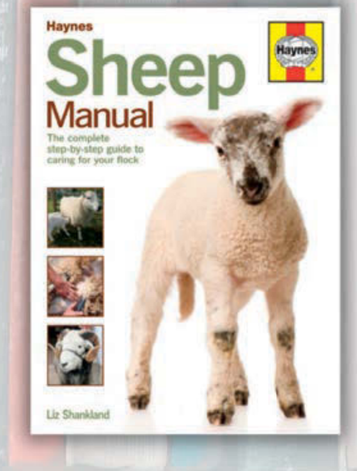
Online bookshop

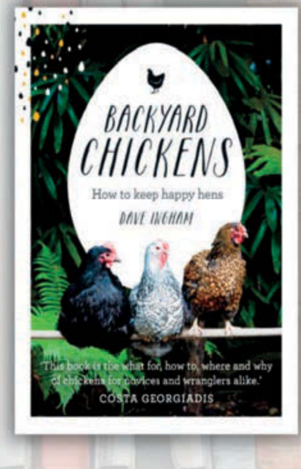

THANE PRINCE
Preserves, Pickles & Cures
RECIPES FOR THE MODERN KITCHEN LARDER


The HEALTHY Vegetable Garden
A natural, chemical-free approach to soil, biodiversity and managing pests and diseases
Sally Morgan


BEEKEEPING
A SEASONAL GUIDE
THE CLASSIC WORK ON BEES
RON BROWN


BACK TO BASICS
How to BUILD, MAINTAIN, AND USE A COMPOST SYSTEM
Secrets and Techniques You Need to Know to Grow the Best Vegetables
By Kelly Smith


Haynes
Sheep Manual
The complete step-by-step guide to caring for your flock
Liz Shankland


BACKYARD CHICKENS
How to keep happy hens
DAVE INGHAM
'This book is the what for, how to, where and why of chickens for novices and wranglers alike.'
COSTA GEORGIADIS

Practical Smallholder Series
Avoid the vet
Best practice for the care of your birds
CARE AND WELFARE ■ PREVENTATIVE MEASURES ■ DISEASE CONTROL

A huge selection of books, covering all aspects of smallholding

Including books written by the editor of The Country Smallholder!

ORDER TODAY:

SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/CSHBOOKS

Winton

COMPACT TRACTOR ATTACHMENTS

wintonmachinery.co.uk

01420 520591

A range of mowers and groundcare machinery ideal for smallholders. Visit our website to find your nearest stockist.

Beetroot: Perfect for Baking with Chocolate

Mrs Simkins Smallholder Recipes bring the changing seasons into your kitchen

Beetroot from the garden mixes well with chocolate

Beetroot adds wonderful moisture and depth to chocolate cakes and brownies, not to mention extra goodness. Some kind of magic seems to happen between chocolate and beetroot as the beetroot leaves no trace of its own flavour in the finished cake. Don't be tempted though, to add beetroot juice to glace or buttercream icings, or delicate puddings, to colour them pink as they will taste of beetroot, even adding too much commercial beetroot red cake colouring can result in a pronounced beetroot-y tang.

PREPARING BEETROOT

The ideal preparation for savoury or sweet applications, without the strong smell beetroot gives off when boiling, which can be a bit overpowering.

- Trim leaves and roots from 225g cleaned, even-sized beetroots.
- Roast whole in an ungreased ovenproof dish, at 180C (fan oven or equivalent) covered with foil, for 1-1½ hours until tender.
- Peel immediately: steady the beets with a fork and use a sharp knife.

CHOCOLATE CAKE (OR BROWNIES) WITH BEETROOT

Perfect for family celebrations, a food processor makes mixing easy and incorporates the beetroot efficiently.

Finish by sandwiching with chocolate buttercream. Seedless raspberry jam is lovely spread under the buttercream on the bottom layer. Decorate according to the occasion: you could pop on a few raspberries/summer berries in season.

Alternatively, bake the whole mix in a 20cm brownie tin, at the same temperature as for the cake, for around 20 minutes. Gorgeous with or without a topping of boiled chocolate frosting.

Beetroot and Chocolate Cake

For the Cake or Brownies
Serves 8 generously

- 175g prepared beetroot, diced
- 175g soft dark brown sugar
- 110g salted butter, softened
- 150g plain flour
- 25g cocoa powder
- 1 level teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 2 level teaspoons cream of tartar
- 3 medium eggs, beaten
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 75g dark chocolate chopped into roughly ½ cm pieces (or use dark chocolate chips)

Preheat oven to 160C fan oven 180C non-fan, gas mark 4 or equivalent

You will need 2 x greased 18cm loose bottomed sandwich tins

Whiz the sugar and beetroot together to a puree. Sieve in the cocoa and add the butter. Whiz to combine. Don't worry if it looks faintly curdled.

Add the raising agents to the flour and sieve half over the mixture; add the eggs and vanilla. Sieve in the remaining flour; and whiz it again until smooth and glossy. Remove the processor blade; and stir in the chopped chocolate/chocolate chips.

Divide the mixture equally between the tins.

Bake for 20 minutes or until a skewer inserted comes out clean.

CHOCOLATE BUTTERCREAM (FOR CAKE)

- 100g butter, softened
- 180g sieved icing sugar
- 20g cocoa powder
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1-2 tablespoons milk to mix

Sieve the cocoa and icing sugar together into the softened butter gradually, mixing blending it with a wooden spoon. Finally, loosen the mixture slightly with milk and beat until smooth and glossy.

Alternatively, Whiz the icing sugar and cocoa in the clean, dry bowl of your food processor and whiz together. Add the vanilla and 1 tablespoon of milk and whiz until smooth and glossy, add remaining tablespoon of milk if necessary.

AMERICAN BOILED CHOCOLATE FUDGE FROSTING (FOR BROWNIES)

Version of American-style frosting tastes fantastic on the brownies.

- 110g granulated sugar
- 40g salted butter, diced
- 40ml semi-skimmed milk
- 90g dark chocolate

Combine sugar, butter, and milk in a small heavy-bottomed saucepan.

Bring to the boil stirring constantly. Boil for 30 seconds exactly, still stirring.

Remove from heat; add chocolate. Stir until melted: once melted, pour frosting immediately over the brownies.

Working quickly, smooth into place with a flexible spatula before it sets.

Avoid disturbing frosting further until completely set: once set mark brownies into squares.

ALL ABOUT MRS SIMKINS

Originally from Lincolnshire, Mrs Simkins lives in the Dorset countryside with her family. A keen gardener, she has a small productive plot with a selection of fruit and vegetables, herbs and flowers shoe-horned in, plus a few so called weeds for foraging, and keeps hens. She specialises in cooking with home grown produce, and traditional British regional recipes, given a bit of a makeover to suit modern tastes and kitchens. She writes for several magazines (including Country Smallholding since 2011) and is the author of several books. Check out her website on *www.MrsSimkins.co.uk*

DIY Meat Smoking – Enhancing home produced flavour!

Discover how simple and affordable it can be to add a whole new dimension to the flavour of meat with home curing and smoking.

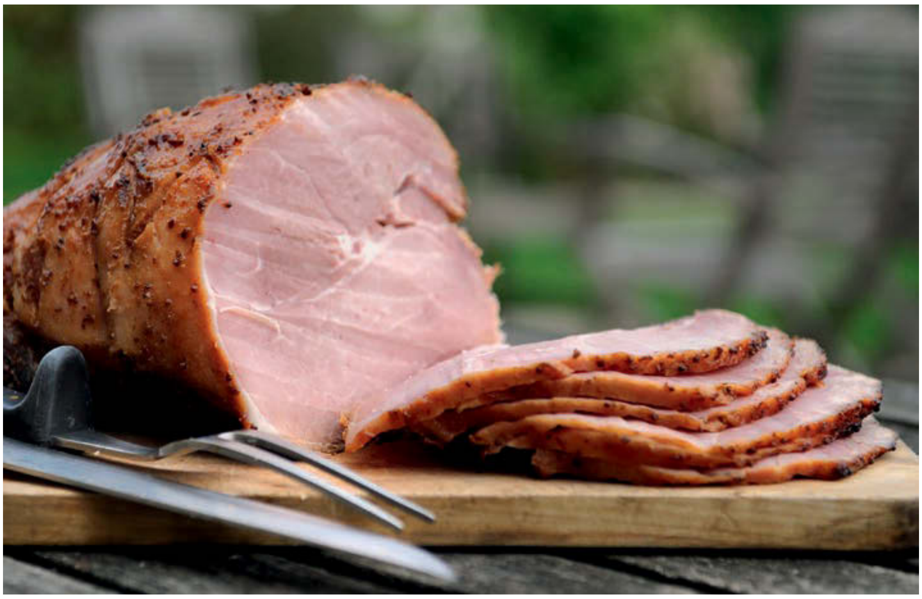
While none of us who have tasted the delights of home-reared pork will have much to grumble about, there's always room for an alternative approach when it comes to cooking meat. Undoubtedly delicious though a conventionally-roasted shoulder of pork may be, have you ever thought about slow-cooking a fresh joint in a hot smoker?

The chances are that you haven't, but I urge you to give it a go. As increasing numbers of 'foodies' are finding out, getting started with your own smoking kit at home needn't be expensive or difficult, and the results can be quite superb. Apart from smoking your own bacon and homemade sausages, you can add an interesting new layer of subtle flavouring to any other cut of pork, as well as all other meats, fish, poultry, cheese, nuts and even vegetables.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

However, the first important thing to appreciate is that, just because there may be charcoal and smoke involved, the modern smoking of food at home is nothing like barbecuing. The small window of cooking opportunity that exists with the typical barbeque offers next to no flexibility. In most cases, there's a relatively short period during which the coals are at their best, which signals a rush to get everything seared, scorched and often burnt. We've all done it, I'm sure; producing drumsticks that are charred on the outside but cold and pink in the middle, or hard, blackened sausages!

In reality, searing and burning meat is no way to guarantee flavour, and it's important to forget everything you know about barbequing when you set to work with a smoker. The two techniques couldn't really be more removed from each other, but, because both tend to involve working outside with heat and smoke, beginners often assume there's a great similarity.



Gaining the ability to produce DIY-cured and smoked ham like this at home is wonderful, and it isn't difficult, either!

Smoking, though, is a more relaxed process; it takes many hours to complete instead of a few frantic, flaming moments. Smoked food is 'slow food' and, by and large, you probably need to allow at least double the conventional cooking time to achieve the desired results. It's a process that simply can't be rushed; the smoke must be given time to do its gentle but oh-so-tasty work.

HOT OR COLD?

The next thing to appreciate is that smoking doesn't always cook food. It certainly can do, but, depending on the technique you use, it can also be employed to create subtle, additional flavours in raw food that's yet to be cooked. Perhaps the most obvious example of this is the production of smoked bacon.

Back in the mists of time, smoking and curing (which I'll come on to shortly) were relied upon as essential ways of preserving fresh meat. In the days before fridges and freezers, raw meat couldn't be kept in a satisfactory condition for more than a day or two without being preserved in some way. The two common ways of doing this – which evolved over generations – were smoking and salting.

Joints of ham would be hung in chimneys, and cuts of beef would be laid down in containers of salt; both essentially methods of drying the meat. It's moisture which tends to be the cause of decay and rotting, so the more that can be removed, the better in terms of useable life. However, there's an obvious limit in practical terms, and these days, few of us

As long as you follow a few basic rules, adopt the correct method and invest in the right equipment, the world of curing and smoking will be at your fingertips!

Bradley
OAK
48

American manufacturer Bradley makes a range of top-quality hot/cold smokers. One like this will cost about £350.

> **“It’s a process that simply can’t be rushed; the smoke must be given time to do its gentle work.**

are keen to chew away on tough, dry hunks of salted beef or pork.

So the methods used nowadays are designed to be less severe in their effects simply because we don’t have the need for maximum preservation any more. While it’s nice to know that the fresh meat you cure or smoke might last two or three weeks in the fridge, it’s not essential that it does so. Freezing will extend its useable life into many months, which is also handy. But as far as most of us are concerned, these techniques can be regarded as delicious flavour enhancers rather than an everyday necessity.

Smoking can either be done hot or cold; there’s a basic decision to be made here, which is essentially driven by what you’re smoking and how you want to eat it. Hot smoking actually cooks the meat, producing an edible product that requires no further treatment. On the other hand, cold smoking is a simpler process involving – as the name suggests – no heat and, therefore, no cooking action.

Hot smoking generally requires more of an investment to get started, although there are some very affordable (but limited) ways to get started if your budget is really tight. Cold smoking is really only a stepping stone towards the finished product, as most things that are cold-smoked will need to be cooked afterwards.

GETTING STARTED

To discover more about the art of smoking meat, we consulted Alyson Murray, who runs the successful specialist supplier Hot Smoked. “One of the beauties of home smoking is that there are virtually no restrictions on what you can put through the process,” she explained. “As well as pork and all other meats, you can hot-smoke nuts, garlic, vegetables and even fruit for use in chutney. Cold smoking tends to work best when producing bacon, hams and specialist sausage, such as chorizo. But it’s also very effective for adding an extra taste dimension to foods like garlic, chillies, cheese and even salt crystals.”

The Bradley smoker relies on a supply of wood chip bisquettes, fed automatically onto the electric heating plate in the base of the smoking cabinet once every 20 minutes.

Another aspect we were anxious to clarify was how and where curing fits into the smoking procedure. “The purpose of the curing stage is to preserve the meat,” Alyson added. “Essentially, it draws liquid out to slow down the build-up of bacteria. This is achieved by using strong salts – whether as a commercially-available dry rub or in the form of a liquid brine – and takes several days to complete. Then smoking is used to create a final seal on the meat and add an additional layer of flavour.”

The most basic option for hot smoking is a simple piece of cookware called a hob smoker. It’s a rectangular, shoe-box-sized, stainless steel container that’s designed to sit on a gas ring in the kitchen or outside on the barbeque. Wood chips of your choice are sprinkled into the base, and then the meat is placed above these on a wire rack. A lid ensures that both the heat, moisture and the majority of the smoke are kept inside, but obviously, some of the latter does escape. So, indoor users must be prepared for something of a smoky invasion in the kitchen!

WHICH WOOD?

Talking of smoke, the type of wood you choose can make a big difference to the flavour of the end result. As Alyson pointed out, “It’s important to take care with the choice you make. Lots of people opt to use oak because it’s the one that everyone’s heard of. But, in reality, the results can sometimes be disappointing simply because oak imparts such a strong flavour; it can be overpowering, and some users find that it actually spoils the taste of the meat.

“So I always advise people to think carefully before they start. Nowadays, there are plenty of interesting wood options available (refer to Popular wood smoke flavours panel), so there’s no need to risk tainting your meat with an over-intrusive, smokey flavour. While I’d have to admit that the differences between some of the more unusual smoking woods can be subtle, there’s certainly an advantage to choosing one of the less powerful, sweeter-smelling options in some cases.”

Further up the equipment scale, a couple of hundred pounds should be sufficient to get started with a kit that’ll allow both hot and cold smoking. Of course, if you’re really serious and money is no object, you could opt to spend anything between £450 and £4,500 for a ceramic Kamodo Joe grill that’s based on the type of lumpwood-fired, clay ovens traditionally used in Japan. These designs offer tremendous heat insulation and moisture

BLACKDOWN FARM SERVICES

AGRI PARTS

NEW Mower Blades, for drum mowers and disc beds, for a range of mowers and manufacturers, Claas, Krone, SIP, Kuhn, etc, genuine & non genuine options. Please call to discuss. **£POA + VAT**

Compact Air Suspension Seat, 12 volt, grey fabric, comfort cushions, fold-up armrests, height adjustment, multifix mounting design. . . . . **£650.00 + VAT**

Universal Tractor Front Mudguard Kit, L=1180mm x W=400mm x H= 265mm, Curve Length= 1320mm . . . . **£425 + vat**

Tool Box Aluminium Chequer Plate 26x12x12 c/w key Under body toolbox. 26inch x 12inch x 12inch (675mm x300mm x300mm.) Folding Handle. Supplied with 2 x Keys. Folded steel for water proofing. Suitable for all Trailers, Commercial etc. . . . . . **£150.00 + VAT**

Wired Reversing Camera System – Comes with 7'' HD Monitor 800 (RGB) x 480 with no audio, CMOS Camera with night vision, 20m 4Pin Cable, & removable sunvisor. . . . . **Special Offer £150 + VAT**

PTO Shaft A4 1200mm 1.3/8 6 splQR/Shearbolt 1700mm when extended Length end to end = 1200mm X+X =1000mm Shearbolt M8 8.8 T **£149.50**

Air & Hydraulic with WABCO load sensing valve. Including, Shunt Valve, 50L tank, 4 x T24-25 air/ hydraulic chambers. . . . . . **£1,495.00 + VAT**

Toplink Heavy Duty JD 530-720mm Cat 2+2 M36 x 3 thread. With ball ends. For John Deere 5005, 6000 SE, 6000, 6010 SE, 6010, 6015, 6020 L, 6020 SE, 6020, 6025, 6030 Premium, 6030 Standard, 7020, 7030 series . . . .**£125 + VAT**

Mirror Head Double Universal, 430 x 205 x 80mm. Independently adjustable mirror heads allow greater range of vision. Max bracket 22mm. . . . . **Single £50.00 + VAT. Pair £90.00**

NEW Euro 8 weld on bracket frame, comes with spacer bar, red oxide undercoated, 1000mm by 460mm. Special offer . . . . **Special Offer £55 + VAT**

Adblue – available in 5L, 10L, 20L cans or 200L drum or 1000L IBC . . . . **Prices from £17.95 + VAT**

Multi Purpose Grease, High Quality Lithium EP2 Grease in 400g cartridges. High temperature & pressure versions also available. **Prices from £1.99 + VAT per cartridge or £24.95 + VAT for a box of 12.**

01823 429431

www.blackdownfarmservices.co.uk

BFS
BLACKDOWN FARM SERVICES

07760 236534

sales@blackdownfarmservices.co.uk

NEW Cherry Products Work Platforms, galvanised, sprung gate, chequer plate floor, kick guards, full width tool shelf, HSE certificate, choice of sizes. Tine slots, brackets or both. **£POA**

NEW Samasz Grassland Equipment, Mowers – Drum & disc beds, with or without conditioners, front, rear & butterfly (with groupers). Tedders – Mounted & trailed, 4 to 8 rotors. Rakes – Single & twin rotors. All with 2 year warranty. In the yard to view. **£POA**

NEW SIP Disc Mowers, plain or conditioner, mounted or trailed, front also, quick change blades, suspension, unrivalled 3 year warranty! Choice of sizes in stock. **From £6,995**

NEW Sutton Eco Sweep 230 Sweeper Brush, 2.3m wide, galvanised body, plastic bristles, rear caster wheels, collection hopper, 3 point linkage. **£2,295**

NEW BFS Work Platforms, 2 person capacity, kick boards, floor grips, harness points, self closing gate, high mesh back, pallet fork mounted. In high vis yellow. Choice of size. **From £995**

NEW Beaco Products Transport Link Boxes, 4ft, 5ft, and 6ft wide, manual tipping, removable tailgate, cat 1 and 2 pins, good useful boxes. **From £695**

NEW MIX BRU180 General Purpose Bucket, 1.8m (6ft) wide, 26 cu/ft capacity, straight sides, well made. Chilton MX or Euro brackets. Other sizes and MX items in stock. **£695**

NEW Misc Tractor Pallet Forks, floating bar type, good strong frame, well made, Euro 8 brackets. **£650**

USED Whites Handling Pallet Forks, adjustable forks, high back frame, good condition, skid steer brackets. Also available skid steer to A frame adapter plate. **£POA**

USED Claas Mower Conditioner, 2650 model, 8ft cutting width, good blades, good tines, been through workshop. Good condition, Ready to go. **£2,995**

USED Hawk Fawk Buckrake, High capacity grass fork, 7ft wide, Hardox tines, hydraulic push (flick) off, hydraulic hoses, Euro 8 brackets. **From £2,095**

USED Grays Buckrake, 10ft wide, hydraulic pushoff, good tight tines, 3 point linkage mounted, new hydraulic hoses, good working order, good condition. **£1,295**

USED McHale Bale Handler, over the top type, for square & round bales, squeezes from the rear, roller on front. In good working order, good condition. Hydraulic hoses & Euro 8 brackets. **£1,295**

USED Twose Bale Handler, over the top type, for square & round bales. In good working order, very good condition. Hydraulic hoses & Euro 8 brackets. **£1,295**

USED Quicke 150 Silograb, 1.5m (5ft) wide, 8 tines top & bottom – all tight & straight, new hydraulic hoses, nice tidy grab. Euro 8 brackets **From £1,295**

USED Tanco Bale Handler, over the top design, for round or square bales, good working order, tidy condition. Off farm, just in. Hydraulic hoses and MX brackets. **From £895**

USED Misc Loader Bucket, 2m wide, nice large bucket, good condition, Trima no5 brackets. **£695**

USED Misc Bucket with digging teeth, 1.6m (5ft3) wide, 7 digging teeth, good front edge, good strong bucket. Euro 8 brackets. **£595**

USED Misc Bale Spikes, choice of single & twin spikes, choice of brackets. Call to see if we have what you need! **From £150**

USED SIP Spider 615 Tedder, 2010, 6 rotors, 6.15m working width, hydraulic folding, good working order, good condition. One owner. Taken as p/x against a new one. JUST IN

Home-smoked bacon is a revelation to most people who try it for the first time. It truly is possible to make a great-tasting product in the domestic environment.

For those who want to see what home smoking is all about with too much of a financial outlay, Camerons hob smokers start from about £50.

The popular ProQ Frontier hot smoker is truly multi-functional. As well as being an excellent hot smoker, it'll also roast, steam and barbeque. It retails at £350.

POPULAR WOOD SMOKE FLAVOURS

Alder
Delicate and ideal for fish (especially salmon) and seafood. Great for pork, poultry and light-meat game too.

Apple
Strongest of the fruitwoods. Good all-rounder and popular with pork and poultry smokers.

Beech
Mild hardwood, slightly nutty. Ideal for white meat and fish

Cherry
Mild fruitwood that's good with lamb and game, poultry, and fish.

Chestnut
Sweet and intense, it's stronger than the fruitwoods and is particularly suited to turkey.

Hickory
Strong-flavoured option often used for bacon, but a great all-round too, without the strength or bitterness often associated with oak

Maple
Mildish hardwood with a slight sweetness. Works well with pork, poultry and cheese. Great with delicate trout too.

Oak
Versatile wood that works with most foods and provides a heavy, smoke flavour. Great for red meat or blended with a fruitwood for poultry and fish.

> **"There's no need to risk tainting your meat with an over-intrusive, smokey flavour**

retention properties, making them ideal for slow cooking of all sorts. They can also be operated across an impressive temperature range, so they are great for all sorts of roasting, baking and hot smoking.

ECO OPTION

At the other end of the complexity and price scales, you'll find the ProQ Eco Smoker, a cold smoker made from recycled cardboard. Essentially a simple cardboard box, the Eco Smoker is supplied flat-packed, takes just a few minutes to assemble and costs £35. Grill racks and a drip tray fit inside an inner sleeve, which then slides down into the main box. Obviously, being made of cardboard, care is needed with this unit when it comes to smoke generation. Naked flames certainly aren't recommended!

One very neat solution is to use the ProQ Cold Smoke Generator, a simple, straight-edge spiral frame (see photograph) packed with wood dust and allowed to smoulder. The spiral nature of the design ensures that the dust 'burns' progressively in towards the centre but takes about 10 hours to do so. The smoke produced is generated without any heat, so this unit can be used as a cold smoke source in hot smokers, covered barbeques and homemade smoking cabinets.

If you're contemplating cold smoking, one very useful rule of thumb is always to ensure that foodstuffs go into the smoker at room temperature. Chilled products taken straight out of the fridge will create problems with moisture, and moisture is a big enemy as far as smokers are concerned.

While condensation or sweating on the food won't cause any operational problems for the smoker itself, it can severely limit the action of the smoke on the food. The smoke particles will be more readily absorbed and retained by the moisture, thus preventing their flavour from being taken up by the food.

FINDING A CURE

One of the things that Alyson has noticed among her customers is that many of them are wary of the curing process. "Sometimes it's quite hard convincing new customers that smoking is nothing like barbequing. Then, getting them to feel confident and enthusiastic about curing can be even more of a struggle," she told me. "This is a shame because there really is nothing to fear about the process.

"Dry-curing is probably the more convenient option, as it can be done in a plastic bag or container inside the fridge. All you need do is rub the surface of the meat

This is the clever ProQ Cold Smoke Generator, which costs £35 and will smoulder the wood dust of your choice for up to 10 hours.

The cardboard ProQ Eco Smoker is an affordable and environmentally friendly cold smoker. You can put together a starter kit containing a cold smoke generator, wood dust and the smoker unit for about £75.

with a dry cure mix – readily available to buy pre-mixed, or you can blend your own – then store it in a cool place for a few days. It helps if you turn the meat daily and, in some cases, if you drain off the fluid that's been drawn out and re-coat it with curing rub.

"The important thing to remember, though, is to give the meat a thorough rinse at the end of the curing period, to remove any salt left on the surface. The best approach is to submerge the whole piece of meat in clean, fresh water and leave it there for 30 minutes. Getting this right is worthwhile, as any curing mix left on the meat will be much too salty to eat. Rinsing won't affect what's happened inside but will ensure the outside isn't spoilt.

"Finally, it's essential to dry the meat carefully after it's been rinsed. Remove what you can initially using a paper towel or clean cloth, then give the meat an hour or two to dry naturally, either in the fridge or in a cool room under a cover. After this, you'll be ready either to start the smoking stage or to wrap and store the meat in your freezer. Despite still being raw, a well-cured piece of meat will keep for about three weeks in the fridge. Smoking adds a further protection, as well as a delicious flavour."

There are so many contrasting views and alternative methods that it really is impossible to generalise on almost any aspect.

The one thing you can be sure about, however, is that getting involved in the curing and smoking of your own home-reared pork is a wonderful and involving thing to do. If you are interested in the food you eat, buying a smoker will open up a whole new world of possibilities for you and your taste buds.

Smoking meat should be regarded as a leisurely pastime. There's plenty of time to savour what you're creating and to get excited about the prospects of trying something new. Experimentation is the name of the game, and if you pick up any of the books on the subject, you'll find no shortage of recipes and techniques to try. Give it a go, and while you'll almost certainly make a few mistakes to start with, you'll be learning all the time, developing worthwhile new skills, understanding more about the food you're eating and having great fun into the bargain!

For more details on Practical Pigs *magazine, and to subscribe, see: bit.ly/3ZxFM33*

Discover how you can support the conservation of our rare native breed pigs, visit: **britishpigs.org**

FURTHER INFORMATION

Hot Smoked offers a one-stop shop for all things smoking-related. Visit the website at *hotsmoked.co.uk*, and you'll find everything from smokers and charcoal to cure mixes and books.

EDENBRIDGE & OXTED

AGRICULTURAL SHOW

Celebrating the country way of life since 1837

A fabulous family day out!

Don't miss the monsters!

August Bank Holiday

Sun 27th & Mon 28th August 2023

Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6LL (nr J6, M25)

- Farm animals
- Horse showing and jumping
- Gundogs and terriers
- The Dorset Axemen
- Local food and drink
- Flowers and vegetables
- Rural crafts
- Vintage vehicles
- Shopping for clothing, homes, gardens and gifts

View competition schedules, make your entries and buy tickets online

www.edenbridge-show.co.uk

@EdenbridgeOxtedShow

Buying a greenhouse this year?

Before you do, consider the benefits of a Keder greenhouse

Whatever the size of your small holding we have the right fit for you

keder greenhouse
www.kedergreenhouse.co.uk

- Low Maintenance
- Excellent Light transmission
- Proven to withstand the worst weather.
- 10-year Guarantee against UV Degradation

Keder Greenhouse Limited
Newtown, Offenham, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 8RZ
Phone: 01386 49094 email: sales@kedergreenhouse.co.uk
www.kedergreenhouse.co.uk

Smallholder Protect®

Insurance Protection to cover **ALL** your Smallholding Property, Livestock and Liability needs. (for farms under 50 acres)

Cover
Starts from
£320
inc IPT

As with all smallholding insurance, we cover what matters most:

Property Livestock Machinery

Plus
All your liability needs - public, product and even employer's
And
we can also include your home and contents insurance – so everything covered under one policy

SMALLHOLDER PROTECT

Quote online via our website

www.smallholderprotect.co.uk

Smallholder Protect is a trading name of H&H Insurance Brokers Ltd, authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Firm Reference Number 305809.

MADE IN BRITAIN
25 YRS

The **NEW** Tramper S, at one with the environment

The Tramper has been the best all-terrain scooter in the UK for 25 yrs.

The NEW Tramper S has benefitted from our continual improvements with all-new coil spring suspension giving an even better comfortable ride; LED lighting gives greater clarity and uses less energy, so now your journey can be smoother, for longer!

Every Tramper is hand-built for each owner, which exceeds rigid manufacturing standards, resulting in utmost safety with utmost driving pleasure.

The zero-emission electric Tramper can be tailored to your particular disability, and with adjustments to make your experience enjoyable.

So, whether it's a shopping trip or an off-road excursion, you'll find a Tramper is designed to take care of you and your environment.

TRAMPER S

Please call us on 01794 884766 or visit www.tramper.co.uk

LOVE HUMBLE BY NATURE LAND

LEARN SOMETHING NEW ON KATE HUMBLE'S FARM

Photography: the Natural World - Sat 1st July
Pigs for Beginners - Sat 1st July
Weave a Driftwood Basket - Sat 15th July
Bee-Keeping - Sat 15th July
Smallholding for Beginners - Sat 5th August
Weave Willow Frame Basket - Sat 15th Sept
Dry Stone Walling - Sat 23rd September
Wild Food Foraging - Sat 23rd September
Learn to Spin Sheep Wool - Sat 7th October
Goats for Beginners - Sun 8th October
Cider Making - Sun 15th October

WWW.HUMBLEBYNATURE.COM 01600714595

RURAL SCENE

Equestrian | Smallholdings | Residential | Farms | Lifestyle

An Independent Estate Agency Specialising in the Sale of Rural Lifestyle Properties Nationwide

Bancyfelin CARMARTHENSHIRE

Offers Over £500,000 EO7256

- Refurbished Detached 3 / 4 Bed House
- Energy Rating: E
- Stable Barn with Six Indoor Pony Boxes & One Outdoor Pony Box, Double Garage
- Large Lawned Garden
- Five Gently Sloping Paddocks
- Stunning Views to Laugharne and The Black Mountain
- Approx. 2 Acres In All

Girton NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Guide Price £850,000 AR7223

- Two Separate Bungalows
- Energy Ratings: D&A
- Set In Approx. 5.7 Acres
- Outbuilds Inc. Barns, Garages / Workshop, Kennels and Games Room
- Six Stables, Tack Room, Coach Store and Dog Grooming Room
- Grazing Paddocks, Potential to Rent Further Adjoining Land
- Rural Yet Accessible Location

To view the full range of property that we have available, please visit our website
www.ruralscene.co.uk

DO YOU HAVE A **SMALLHOLDING TO SELL?**

CONTACT US NOW

for an obligation free chat to find out how Rural Scene can help you **SELL** your **Rural Lifestyle Property!**

01264 850700 | postbox@ruralscene.co.uk | www.ruralscene.co.uk

What's so marvellous about Market Drayton and Shropshire?

Welcome to our regular column all about the best places to buy a country smallholding

Hard to know where to start with Shropshire's attractions. It's the County that is sometimes known as Salop, and is a landlocked country that borders Wales in the West, (with the famous Offa's Dyke, subject of so many historical fiction novels), Cheshire to the North, Staffordshire to the east, Worcestershire to the East and Herefordshire to the South. Could you find a more beautiful collection of counties with so much history and rural life? Yet Shropshire is one of England's most rural and sparsely populated counties, with a population density of 136/km2 (350/sq mi). The Shropshire Hills area of Outstanding National Beauty covers about a quarter of the County. The River Severn, Britain's longest river, runs through the county, exiting into Worcestershire by the Severn Valley.

There are five main towns in Shropshire, the county town of Shrewsbury, which is roughly in the centre of the county, Telford to the east, Owestry in the northwest Oswestry in the northwest, Bridgnorth to the south of Telford and Ludlow, steeped in history, to the south. There are also eighteen market downs of which Market Drayton in the northeast is one.

It's also a county well served by canals reflecting the historic industrial sites in the county. The Ironbridge Gorge area is a UNESCO World Heritage site, covering Ironbridge, Coalbrookdale and part of Madeley. You are not going to be bored living in Shropshire for places to visit.

Shropshire even has a county flower, the round-leaved sundew. It is a crimson-coloured insectivorous plant that requires a boggy habitat. Habitat loss means that it has dramatically reduced in numbers but can be found still at Longmynd in Shropshire.

Lawley Ridge, looking towards the Wrekin, Shropshire

MARKET DRAYTON, A LIVELY MARKET DOWN WITH A FAMOUS FARM

The Festival Drayton Centre is a community owned building that has evolved as a direct result of the time, dedication and commitment of many volunteers The Centre provides wide-ranging facilities which include a state-of-the-art theatre for movies and live events, meeting rooms for conferences, a licensed coffee shop and an extensive arts and leisure programme.

Originally brought into community ownership in 1984, the Centre underwent a major extension and refurbishment in 2004, resulting in it becoming the Best Regional Winner of the West Midlands Market Towns Award for regeneration in 2006. Now it puts on an exciting range of up to date films plus community activities and live productions that are well supported. You can find out more on their Facebook page.

On the outskirts of Market Drayton is the famous Fordhall Farm. The farm drive is signposted off the A53 between Market Drayton and Tern Hill, located adjacent to the Muller Dairy factory. It is England's first community-owned farm following a high profile campaign in 2006. At the time over 8000 people across the world supported siblings Charlotte and Ben Hollins to save their family home.

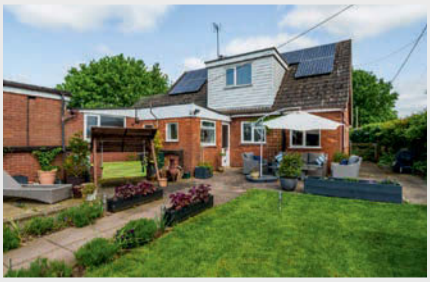
Now owned by the community and farmed by Ben Hollins, Fordhall is a wonderful example of community spirit and real organic farming. It is free to visit. Of interest to smallholders is that they aim to show that small-scale farming offers a viable way of life. The farm has been chemical free for over 65 years, and they rear cattle, sheep and pigs on an outdoor extensive grazing system. Check out their website www.fordhallfarm.com and follow them on Facebook.

Market Drayton has a range of schools including a comprehensive plus health facilities.

FEATURED PROPERTY NEAR STOKE UPON TERN, SHROPSHIRE

The property is off the road down a long track

Home paddocks with a view of Cherry Croft



Cherry Croft chalet bungalow and garden

Raised vegetable beds in the garden

Cherry Croft is a four bedroom chalet bungalow set in almost 3.5 acres in a rural but accessible location. It has all the usual things that make life comfortable, oil- fired central heating, double glazing and it has solar panels too. The Kitchen/Dining Room has been extended and has loads of fitted units and work surfaces, ideal for cooking and preserving smallholder produce. A double oven, grill, hob, microwave, dishwasher and two fridges plus that wonderful thing, a walk in Pantry Cupboard complete it. Double doors lead out to the garden.

Outside, the property is set back from the road down a 100-yard private driveway with three stables plus storage, hay barn and further useful outbuildings, a Nissan hut, woodstore and a greenhouse and garden shed. The garden has raised vegetable beds. There is plenty of space for lorry/trailer parking accessed by double gates. What more does a smallholder need?

Price Guide is £725,000

The agent is Rural Scene, 01264 850700

www.ruralscene.co.uk

SmithsSectional™

Specialists in British Timber Buildings

MADE IN BRITAIN

Quality Bespoke & British

BECAUSE NOT ALL TIMBER BUILDINGS ARE THE SAME

We are specialist British manufacturers of high quality small and large chicken housing, field shelters, goat housing, stabling and bespoke animal housing

MIDI DELL CHICKEN HOUSE

The Midi Dell Chicken Coop and Run houses approx. 6 hens, available in a smaller and a larger size

THICKET

The Thicket Aviary Style Hen House with covered run, houses up to 14 hens and is available as a walk-in chicken coop

SHERWOOD CHICKEN HOUSE

Traditional hen cabin with optional wheels and run, available in 7 sizes to house from 6 - 100 hens

WE MAKE ALL OF OUR CHICKEN HOUSES TO ORDER AND CAN MAKE ANY ADJUSTMENTS OR MODIFICATIONS THAT YOU REQUIRE

HAYWOOD

Free Range Chicken Houses with roll away nests boxes, available in 3 sizes to house from 25 – 100 hens

FIELD SHELTERS

Mobile Pony and Livestock Shelters made with high quality heavy duty timbers and optional steel skids

GOAT HOUSES AND ANIMAL SHELTERS

Please call us for more details

WE ARE FAMILY A COMPANY AND OFFER DELIVERY AND INSTALLATION

MADE IN BRITAIN®

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR
- Pig Arks • Garden sheds
- Summer houses
- Equestrian buildings

TEL: 01630 673747 EMAIL: info@ smithssectionalbuildings.co.uk

www.smithssectionalbuildings.co.uk

SSB & Co. Ltd. Trading as Smiths Sectional Buildings
Unit 1, Manor House Farm, Park Lane, Ashley, Market Drayton,Shropshire, TF9 4EH, GB

PRACTICAL Poultry

July 2023

Fine feathers make fine birds but are they hard or soft feathered?

● Using saddles to prevent damage to poultry when mating

● Why you need to watch out for the the ruthless redmite

● And so to bed. How and why chickens roost

Collins Nets

Contact us for a FREE catalogue!

Your one stop shop for game & poultry supplies!

"Really good old fashioned business that helps and delivers straight away"

★★★★★

smite™ organic

www.collinsnets.co.uk - 01308 485422

Make sure your hens have some shade to keep cool

Beat the heat!

Andrew Fothergill, National Poultry Advisor at Farmgate Feeds gives his advice on keeping your hens comfortable in the warmer months.

As we learnt last year, UK summers can be erratic, so we must prepare for all eventualities especially where heat waves are concerned. Although hens are a low maintenance animal to care for, one thing that they are not great at is keeping themselves cool, calm and collected in extreme heat!

Sustained hot temperatures and high humidity can cause uncomfortable conditions for hens as birds cannot sweat and so to cool down, they open their beaks, pant and spread their wings. These cooling strategies can become exhausting and if not enough, can affect their eating patterns which can lead to health issues and reduced egg production.

Here are some top tips which will make all the difference to reducing the effects of heat stress on your flock.

HOUSING ENVIRONMENT

Offering good ventilation inside your chicken coop is necessary year-round, but especially in the summer. The simplest way to do this is to fit a window and leave it slightly open when the hens go to roost. Make sure any openings are predator-proof and if your coop is built predominantly for winter, check if there are any walls or doors you can carefully swap with wire fencing. This will provide your hens a nice cool breeze during the night.

In your hen's outdoor space, ensure there is shade available - if there is no natural shade from trees you can create roofs on the run or string a canopy between posts or fences. You can also reduce the bedding layer on the floor of the coop to no more than 2 inches deep. Too much bedding can act as an insulator trapping heat inside.

Remember to avoid overcrowding – nobody likes to be too close on hot days! At least 4sq ft of indoor coop space and 10sq ft of outdoor space per chicken is perfect.

WATER

The easiest thing you can control is your hens' water supply. Providing a constant supply of cold fresh water is essential on hotter days. Drinking water will help to cool a hens' body temperature; in high temperatures chickens can drink up to twice as much water, so this may mean refreshing their supply a few times a day. You can even add ice cubes to keep their water cool!

Keep your hens' water feeders in a shaded and easily accessible location (e.g. not in the hot coop, especially if they aren't in there in the daytime). There are numerous kinds of containers available - galvanised feeders are a great option as they are weatherproof and durable so will be unaffected by sunlight and strong winds.

BALANCED DIET

Hen feed is best served fresh so store it in a cool, dry environment. Give your hens their morning and evening feed in a shaded area and only offer treats after they have finished their main nutritional feed. Heat often reduces the appetite of hens, so it's essential they have a well-balanced high-quality feed to maintain a consistent source of protein, vitamins and trace minerals supporting their health and egg production.

Cold, refreshing treats with high-moisture content, for example watermelon and other fruits and vegetables are great in high temperatures. When hens consume cold food, it lowers their body temperature from within.

GENERAL WELLBEING

A consistent body temperature is important in your flock - this normally ranges between 40°c - 43°c. Chickens can lower their body temperature by keeping their feet cool; some love to stand in cool water on a warm day. If a bird is still looking pale and panting, provide both water for drinking and an opportunity to paddle and bath in very hot weather.

SIGNS OF HEAT STRESS INCLUDE:

- Panting: breathing heavily through an open beak/ moving their tongues up and down
- Standing/lying with their wings held out from their body
- Droopy and lethargic behaviour
- Reduced appetite
- Pale or discoloured combs and wattles
- Egg production may also decrease with prolonged heat exposure.

● **For more information or advice on what we've covered here, please contact Lisa Mancell at Farmgate Feeds:**

Email:
info.farmgate@forfarmers.eu
Website:
www.farmgatefeeds.co.uk
Tel: 0330 678 1188

Vet advice from an experienced poultry vet

Let's start with some good news on Avian Flu

The Avian Influenza Protection Zone was lifted in Northern Ireland from 00:01 on Friday June 2nd. They have not had the same number of outbreaks that we have had in England. This decision will have been easier to make but I view it as an indicator that those in charge really want to lift this restriction as soon as practically possible.

Furthermore, there comes a point in time when the constant repetition of enhanced biosecurity becomes meaningless. Along the lines of "we are doing that already what more do you want?" Couple this with the blatant disregard by some of the imposition of any restrictions, it all becomes rather counterproductive. What is needed are a few very expensive fines to those who will not even try. Good for the government coffers and justice for those of us who do our best to keep our own and everyone else's flocks healthy.

I am quietly confident, that in the next month or so more clubs and possibly shows will be able to have poultry present and not just their eggs.

That said, I have just had a very enjoyable day and a half in the Poultry and Small animal marquee at the Bath and West Show. It should have been two days but I was called to look at a client's chicks. As a single-handed practitioner, I can only be in one place at a time!

As ever, the success of the marquee was a team effort. Joe Merchant is the chairman of the Poultry, Egg and Small Animal section and Paula Guley is the Vice Chairman. Both were supported by Sophie and daughter Ruby, Gordon, Jayne and Shereen. This year Anita and I (very much the part timer), joined in.

EDUCATION AND FUN AT EGG SHOW

Education and fun were the aim which seems to have been effortlessly achieved. The marquee was filled with a superb array of entries for the various egg classes. Room enough to comfortably walk, push the baby buggy for families and allow access by the scooters of those less mobile.

Creative Crocheting of poultry for inside the home poultry keepers!

The classes were beautifully presented making them so much more than just a bowl with eggs in it . I recall having a wonderful discussion with a lady who was amazed to discover that her hen that was laying bluey green eggs was not such a rarity. Other conversations were around how the colour of the shell influences your perception of the goodness of the of its contents. I was really stumped when asked which eggs were best for pickling. That's the trouble with vets -They do not always know the answers to the most important questions.

The novelty egg classes for the weirdest shaped egg or the smallest hen's egg were a delight. The most inspiring were the decorated eggs and displays. The talent that is out there is truly phenomenal.

All this was supplemented by displays of egg related information ranging from the Easter Egg tree to the time taken to soft boil an ostrich egg compared to a hens egg, the display of eggs from different species of birds and one of the abnormal shaped eggs that hens will sometimes lay. Of these, the most amazing one for me was the thin tubular shaped egg, rather like a small, sweet pepper. How that came about could be the basis for another article.

Anita, my wife, had been asked to bring her crochet birds along for a display. That accounts for the third picture but what was heartening were those visitors who took the trouble to say how impressive they were.

These pictures are positive proof that a poultry marquee without poultry can still be a hugely rewarding, fun and educational experience for all.

As I was helping pack up on the Saturday, carting items to and from the marquee. It was easy to see those who wore footwear that really was not suited to the ground with resultant limps and stiffness. I must spend too much time looking for lame chickens!

GUARD AGAINST POULTRY THEFT PLANNED FROM THE SKIES

One conversation that gives me great concern is the use of drones by thieves to reconnoitre your premises and watch you . In this case it was the theft of breeding Silkies.

It is bad enough dealing with the trauma of theft but when that includes the loss of a life's work. To discover that those who should be investigating really do not understand that these are so much more than just a few hens, is just so disappointing.

So all I can do is make you aware of the problem. Keep a very close eye on unusual drone activity around your property. Always be aware that you could be being targeted by thieves. Report to Neighbourhood Watch or Countryside Watch if you have one in the area.

The drones are used, perhaps after having seen something on social media about your birds, or overhearing a conversation, to see exactly how you get into

Stop Red Mite from the inside with

MITEY STUFF! Concentrate

NEW MITEY STUFF! Concentrate is a 100% natural liquid supplement for Poultry, Ducks & Fowl

Based on aromatics, Mitey Stuff! Concentrate is formulated and researched as a preventative treatment for red mite and other external parasites and does not contain any poison or other chemicals, so not affecting egg production or consumption.

Mitey Stuff! Concentrate is added to the drinking water effectively causing your poultry to become undesirable to ectoparasites when they come out to feed overnight.

Simply add 1ml per 1 litre of drinking water.

Prices start at just £9.95

Aviform
MITEY STUFF! Concentrate
For Red Mite control
Suitable for all Poultry, Fowl & Ducks
Even higher concentrate
Non-toxic & safe to use
Research proven
1000ml
Made in the UK
aviform.co.uk
250ml

feefo ★★★★★ 4.9/5

Gold Trusted Service Award 2023 feefo

Visit our website to view the large number of independently verified reviews to see what Aviform customers think of our products and service plus full product information on the complete range of Aviform supplements.

Order direct | 01953 528008
www.aviform.co.uk

Aviform®

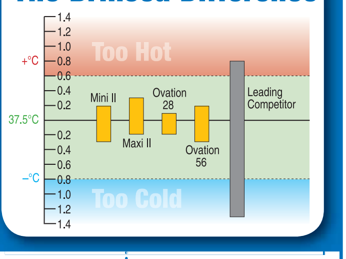
Avian Nutritional Experts
& Manufacturers Since 1977

UFAS

Brinsea lead the world in incubation design with the top-selling Ovation 28 and 56

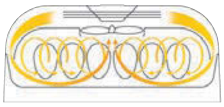
All-digital, all-automatic egg incubators designed with ease of use and consistently high hatch rates in mind with a range of features to suit all bird breeders.

The Brinsea Difference

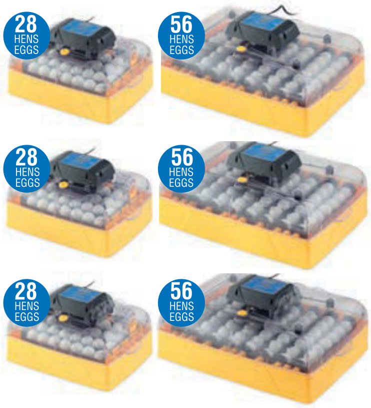


Ovation 28 and 56

with unique Induced Dual Airflow...



...for optimum temperature stability



Ovation 28 & 56 Eco
Digital control
Automatic egg turning

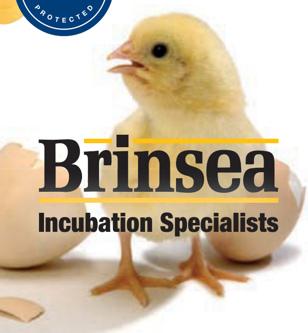
Ovation 28 & 56 Advance
Multi-function digital control
Automatic egg turning
Humidity display

Ovation 28 & 56 EX
Multi-function digital control
Automatic egg turning
Automatic humidity control

"Having used several different incubators I can honestly say Brinsea are the best from the point of view of ease of use and cleaning, reliability and most importantly hatch rate! Worth every penny!!!"

Deb Howe

Biomaster PROTECTED



Brinsea
Incubation Specialists

MADE IN BRITAIN

Celebrating over 40 years
Egg incubator design and manufacture in the UK

THREE YEAR GUARANTEE THREE YEAR

For full specification visit
www.brinsea.co.uk or call **0345 226 0120**
Brinsea Products Ltd
32-33 Buckingham Road, Weston Industrial Estate, Weston-super-Mare, N.Somerset BS24 9BG

Stunning birds Fabulous eggs

Britain's favourites

MABEL PEARMAN'S BURFORD BROWNS

BOOK NOW FOR THE AUTUMN

LEGBARS of BROADWAY

t: 07831 849 036
philip@lee-woolf.co.uk
www.legbarsofbroadway.co.uk

9
THE ROYAL BATH & WEST SHOW
First Prize

Being evenly matched in colour, shape and size is necessary to win an egg class

the poultry housing, the best way to reach your property without being observed and what time of day you feed, let them out and everything else that you do with your flock.

On this occasion, the drone was seen following the owner from the poultry shed back to their house. All that was needed then was to monitor their comings and goings. A time was selected and the Silkies were stolen. Too many for the poultry carriers that the thieves had. They stole a poultry carrier to take the rest.

Only after the event was it learnt that others in neighbouring villages had also lost Silkies. This most certainly was theft to order with a great deal of effort going into finding out where suitable flocks might be found.

BEWARE OF RED MITE

Another topic that came up was red mite. This again is a subject for another article. However, the temperatures that we have had in recent days is just the stimulus needed for an explosive increase in red mite numbers. Do not wait for one of your hens to drop dead unexpectedly off her perch overnight because the microscopic vampires have bled her dry.

When it is dark, take a torch, LED lights do not seem to bother hens as much as the old tungsten bulbs. If you see a layer of mobile grey dust walking down walls or along perches, that is likely to be red mite. They are only red when the have fed on your bird's blood. Death of your hen is due to anaemia which is not as easy to spot in the live hen as you might expect.

During the day, just lift pieces of caked bedding, look under straw or under roofing felt. You cannot miss them if they are there, a heaving mass of grey and red mites scrabbling to get out of the light in amongst a white to cream dust of mite eggs. Likely you will feel them on you as well.

HEALTH AND POULTRY KEEPERS

I was recently sent a copy of a Tweet from APHA (Animal and Plant Health Protection Agency) saying that "they have teamed up with Surrey University to offer two PhD opportunities for scientists to investigate antimicrobial resistance in zoonotic bacteria & develop AI methods to prevent & predict zoonotic disease." (Zoonotic is a disease that can be transmitted between animals and people].

I am assuming that they mean artificial intelligence rather than avian influenza. Therein lies a potential problem. The reliance on computer generated information. Too often, we become caught up in the printed page of results without fully understanding the limitations of the programmer and then the programme that they have written.

Disease current and emerging will always result from a combination of lifestyle and opportunity within the environment of which the potential bacterial infection finds itself. Have things changed to make us more susceptible to previously harmless bacteria?

As a vet, I utilise my understanding of the client in determining how help can be best given to an individual bird or a flock. Can this be programmed without the relevant experience of poultry?

The reality is that it does not matter. APHD will only be asking a limited number of questions. The answers will guide further investigation. How quickly the preventive and predictive AI will be developed, I do not know.

One thing is for sure. Bacteria, under ideal conditions, can replicate every 20 minutes and with each replication they can adapt to changing circumstances. Many bacterial adaptations will have occurred over the three years it takes to complete a PhD.

So whilst we wait to be told by a computer how to avoid the potential dangers of keeping poultry. Try the following:- eat wholesome food, get plenty of exercise, don't forget to drink, get plenty of sleep, don't stress over things you have no control over and wash your hands after handling your birds.

Enjoy your poultry keeping!

341
340
THE ROYAL BATH&WEST SHOW
First Prize
341 PAULA SILKEY
THE ROYAL BATH&WE
SHOW
Second Pr
340 PAULA
FF58 NOVELTY
SMALLEST HEN EGG

The smallest egg competition

Exploring the behaviour of Roosting.

This month **Paul Donovan** investigates how your hens can get a good night's sleep.

Given space, a flock of chickens will roost on the same perch

Roosting is a very complex behaviour involving more than just putting up a few branches, or bits of wood in the coop and hoping the birds are going to sleep on them.

WHY THE NEED TO ROOST?

Most birds roost in trees high off the ground to avoid nocturnal predators creeping up on them during the most vulnerable period of the day, which is when they are asleep. It also reduces the bird's chances of picking up external parasites, bacteria and pathogens which may be active during the night.

Within their home range, the chickens will have preferred roosting. These may not be used solely during the evening, but also during the day to avoid diurnal predators, or simply to get away from one another.

As dusk approaches, the chicken will begin to look for somewhere to sleep and settle down for the night. Once it feels safe, it will then go to sleep. Chickens are sound sleepers which have been shown to enter sleep phases similar to those of humans. For example, at the beginning of the sleep cycle, a chicken will experience Rapid Eye Movement (REM). In humans this may last for several minutes to an hour, but in a chicken, for just a few seconds. REM is the lightest form of the sleep cycle, where the brain is still active, (as active as if it were still awake) and is said to be the phase where the most vivid dreams can be recalled from. Does that mean chickens can dream? And if so, what do they dream about? Who knows.

> **“At the beginning of the sleep cycle, a chicken will experience Rapid Eye Movement (REM)**

SLOW-WAVE SLEEP

Also referred to as deep sleep, slow-wave sleep is the period when the brain stores memories and refreshes itself for processing information the next day. Dreams do not occur during this phase, and the sleep is so deep that it is difficult to rouse an individual from it. Chickens also have the ability to recover lost sleep without having to spend more time sleeping. They achieve it by simply sleeping deeper the next time.

Slow-wave sleep is important to birds as they undertake complex mental tasks such as ‘singing’, nest building and identifying edible foods from inedible. Without the ability to undertake a phase where the brain is rested without having to think about complex tasks, it would simply overload.

Chickens can enter deep sleep for minutes or even seconds

Individuals of the edge of the perch will experience

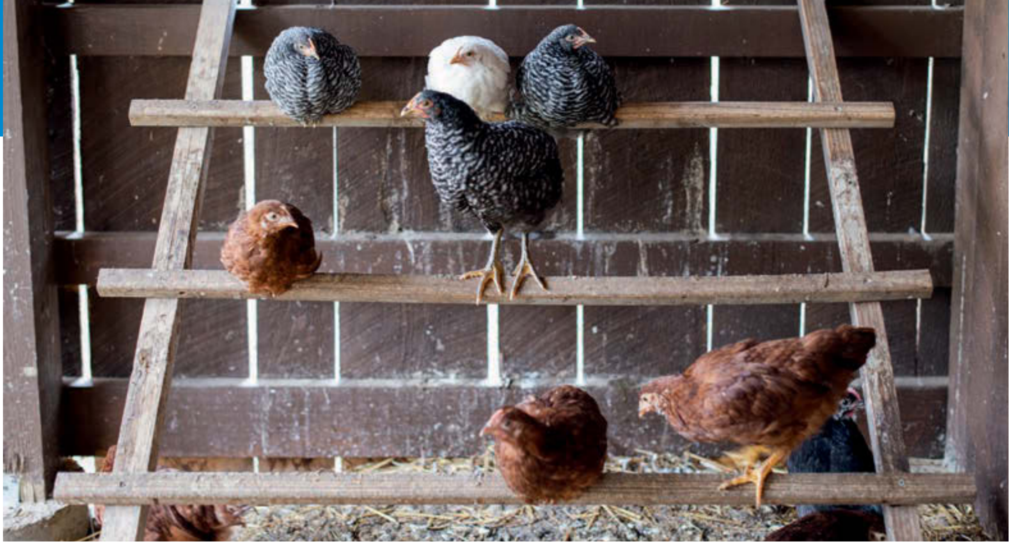
Roosting behaviour will start at an early age.

Roosting can take place during the day and night

The size of perch will dictate the birds comfort level

> “Does that mean chickens can dream?

Whereas humans may experience several hours of deep sleep, chickens have the capacity to enter this phase for minutes, or even seconds; what you might call getting forty winks, but much, much deeper. Although this can take place during any time of the day, it tends to be more frequent during the afternoon when other important activities have been tended to. These brief periods of ‘catch-up’ allow the chicken to cope with periods where sleep may be deprived, without experiencing any adverse effects.



Runs of a perch should be off-set to avoid fouling from birds above

Runs of a perch should be off-set to avoid fouling from birds above

UNIHEMISPHERIC SLOW-WAVE SLEEP (‘USWS’)

One of the most intriguing aspects of sleep in birds, particularly those living in a flock environment, is their ability to sleep with one eye closed and the other open, a behaviour known as Unihemispheric slow-wave sleep. Essentially, what the bird is doing, is putting one half of its brain in sleep mode, while the other half remains awake. This is allowing it to rest, but at the same time be alert for potential predators. In other words, it can be asleep and awake at the same time.

Given space, a flock of chickens will roost on the same perch. If you watch them during the roosting phase, you will notice that those individuals on the inside will sleep with both their eyes closed, while the two outer birds will sleep with one eye closed and the other open. For example, if the bird has individuals to its left, it will keep its right eye open, meaning the left hand side of the brain is asleep. If individuals were to its right, it would have its left eye open, resting the right hand side of the brain. This is because the left eye is wired into the right side of the brain, and the right eye in to the left side of the brain.

The reason why the outer birds undertake Unihemispheric slow-wave sleep, is because they are responsible for keeping an eye out, for predators, and are therefore responsible for the safety of the flock while they are sleeping. Pecking order will dictate where each bird sleeps; the higher individuals sleeping in the middle, lower birds towards the perimeter.

> “Slow-wave sleep is important to birds as they undertake complex mental tasks

It would be mentally fatiguing for these perimeter birds to always sleep with the same eye open or closed all night long, as only one side of the brain would be rested. After a period of time, what these perimeter birds do, is turn 180 degrees around to face the opposite way, so that they can rest the other side of the brain by opening the opposite eye. This side of the brain now takes on the role of guard duty.

USWS is an extremely complex behaviour, because it allows perimeter birds to shift decision making from one side of the brain to the other. Furthermore, an individual can use Unihemispheric slow-wave sleep at will, determining which side of the brain is awake/asleep whenever it wants.

WHEN DOES ROOSTING BEGIN?

At what age roosting begins, very much depends on the individual bird. Chicks begin exploring higher perches within a couple of weeks of age, but individuals which feather out quicker, tend to roost earlier. By and large, by week seven, chicks will have sufficient flight ability to reach quite high roosting points.

WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION

In nature branches are round and perfect for birds to roost on. The bird can choose the size of branch upon which it roosts, and this can directly impact on the

Night time roosting protects the bird from predators.

> **“What is stopping the bird from falling out of the tree once it’s fallen asleep?**

pressure distribution between the foot pads and the keel bone. The domesticated chicken is quite a different bird from its fore-ancestor, the Jungle fowl. They spend much more of their time roosting, and if the roosts provided are not of suitable size, the pressure distribution between the foot pads and keel may be insufficient and can cause health issues.

Because modern chickens are heavier birds than their jungle counterparts, this increased weight placed on the foot pad and keel bone can lead to bone fractures. Interestingly, some research has shown hens with bone fractures lay fewer eggs than those with no fractures, and this is believed to be because calcium is being redirected to repair the bone. During the repair phase the bird is less mobile, spending more time on the ground as its impairment hinders its ability to roost properly.

STAYING PUT

What is stopping the bird from falling out of the tree once it’s fallen asleep? During the sleep phase muscles relax, so one would imagine the grip the bird had on the branch would be lost. Well, that’s not the case.

Evolution has solved this dilemma. Most birds making use of perching points have special flexor tendons in the ankle and toes which ‘lock’ the feet to whatever they are resting/roosting on. As the bird lands on a branch, its body weight causes its legs to bend, tightening the tendons. This is an involuntary reflex action, the bird has no conscious control over. In order for the bird to release the grip, the tendons must be relaxed, which the bird does by simply straightening the legs. Even if the bird were resting on one leg, the same principle applies, it is locked to the branch.

When sat on a perch, a chicken sits mainly on its keel bone rather than directly on the foot pads which places a great deal of stress on this bone. If the perch they are trying to roost on is too thin, all of the bird’s weight is then being directed up the keel bone.

ROUND OR FLAT?

The way in which the chicken’s feet have evolved during the course of their domestication actually makes them more suitable to perching on a flat surface, rather than round ones. As the diameter of a perch increases, not only does the birds ability to balance increase, but its weight is more evenly dispersed over the foot pads. However, there comes a point where the perch may be too wide, and this can lead to tendon damage, as the bird cannot grip the perch properly as its foot will be splayed out.

As the chicken sits mainly on its keel bone, the ideal perch should be of a size and shape to maximise the contact area of the keel bone. In other words, a square perch with rounded edges. The size of perch will obviously depend on the breed of chicken, as those smaller breeds will require a smaller surface are than larger breeds. If provided with the correct size of perch, the bird will get a good night’s sleep.

PROVIDING ROOSTING PERCHES

Free-range birds will find their own roosting perches which they will make use of night after night. Individuals which are raised in an enclosed environment must be provided with the means of roosting. Lack of roosting sites can severely impact on the bird’s health. Unless the chicken coop is spotlessly clean, the birds will be sleeping in their own mess.

Roosting perches can be man made or natural. I use both in my coop. A branch I have placed in there has quite-a-thick diameter, a bit too thick in fact for roosting, but my chickens like standing on it during the day. The perches upon which they roost are constructed by droppers, each approximately 4cm in diameter and constructed into a ladder formation.

The ladder is 2m in length, with four runs each spaced 45cm apart. The reason I have created a ladder arrangement, is that it increases the bird’s enrichment. It gives them opportunities to get off the floor, as well as giving birds which feel stressed, somewhere to get away from more aggressive birds.

Ideally, the length of the roosting perch(s) should be sufficient to accommodate all of the birds, otherwise squabbling may ensue with weaker birds being confined to the lower runs, and dominant ones to the upper. Chickens are surprisingly picky who they sleep next to, and by giving them all the opportunity to sleep next to one another, you are giving them a level playing field to do so. You are not creating a situation whereby the birds are segregating themselves according to their pecking order.

There are other advantages to all the birds being able to perch at the same level. During the winter months sharing body warmth will add to the birds’ comfort level. They may also feel more secure and, a number of birds in closeness to one another can aid with balance.

Where a ladder is formed, it should be placed at an angle such that, any bird sat on any run does not poop on an individual below them. It is also important that the runs are of the correct diameter, otherwise the bird may have difficulty in gripping them, slip off, and not use them. This slipping can lead to lesions and possible infections such as bumblefoot setting in, and result in lameness and reluctance to roost because a great deal of pressure is placed on the foot as the bird lands on the perch.

SITING THE PERCH

Positioning the roosting area is also important. Do not place it over nest boxes, feeders or water stations, not only will these become covered in chicken muck, but eating contaminated food or drinking contaminated water can have implications of the chickens health.

While on the subject of health, allowing the birds to get up off the floor, removes the chances of them catching a chill during the winter months from drafts which whistle beneath doors.

TAIL-END

Sometimes conformity may not follow instinct, and some birds will sleep on the floor, even though roosts are available. If your birds are doing this it may be worthwhile ‘showing’ them how to roost, by placing one of them on a perch. Generally, if one gets the hang of it, all others should follow suite. One of the reasons why they may be reluctant to roost, is that the perches are too thin and the birds feel uncomfortable. Try different sized perches, or even wrap them in rubber; rubber will help with grip if the bird(s) feels insecure.

FARMING AND RURAL EVENTS, SUMMER DAYS OUT

JULY
1 July **Lampeter Agricultural Show** including the Dyfed Angora Goat Society Club Show *www.lampetershow.co.uk*

1-2 July **Winterton Agricultural Show**, Scunthorpe
Website: *www.wintertonshow.co.uk*

2 July **Howden Agricultural and Hortic ultural Show**
Website: *www.howdenshow.co.uk*

7-9 July **Kent County Show**, Detling, Kent.
http://kentshowground.co.uk/

8 July **Dalkeith Agricultural Show**
Website: *www.dalkeithshow.co.uk*

8 July **Liskeard Show**, Cornwall
Website: *www.liskeardshow.org*

8 July **Tendring Hundred Show**, Manningtree. (including Colchester Poultry Club Show).
Website *www.tendringshow.co.uk*

11- 14 July **164th The Great Yorkshire Show**, Harrogate. Telephone: 01423 541000.
Website: *www.greatyorkshireshow.co.uk*

15-16 July **Eccleston Show**
Website: *www.greatecclestonshow.co.uksite*

14-15 July **Caithness County Show**
Website: *www.caithness.co.uk*

15 July **Alrewas Show**, Staffs.
Website: *www.alrewasshow.co.uk*

15 July **Penrith Show**. Cumbria
Website: *www.penrithshow.co.uk*

17 July **Stithians Show**, Cornwall
Telephone: 01209 861073.
Website: *https://stithians.show*

16 July **Bakewell Country Festival, Bakewell** Showground *https://www.visitpeakdistrict.com/events/bakewell-show*

22 July **Cheffins Vintage Auction**, Ely Cambs. Website: *www.cheffins.co.uk*

24-27 July **Royal Welsh Show**, Builth Wells. Telephone 01982 553683
Website: *www.rwas.co.uk*

25th July 152nd **Ryedale Show** *http://www.ryedaleshow.org.uk/*
Telephone 07984 939701

25-27 July **New Forest & Hampshire County Show**.
Website: *www.newforestshow.co.uk*

26 July **126th Nantwich & South Cheshire Show**.
Website: *www.nantwichshow.co.uk*

26 July **Ulverston and North Lonsdale Agricultural Show**
Website: *www.northlonsdaleshow.co.uk*

26 July **Stranraer Show**
Website: *http://www.stranraershow.co.uk*

29 July **Borrowby Show** From humble beginnings back in 1947 Borrowby Show has grown into a successful feature in the show calendar of Yorkshire. It has remained true to the founders original aim of show casing agricultural, horticultural and equestrian best practises.

It's close connection to James Herriot country has seen it feature in the acclaimed Yorkshire Vet serious with members of the Skeldale Veterinary practice regularly competing in the award winning produce tent.
Website: *www.borrowbyshow.org.uk*

29 July **Carnwarth Show**
Carnwath Annual Show is a long established and well supported event. The aim of the show is to promote the advancement of education of residents within the parishes of Carluke, Carnwath, Carstairs, Covington & Thankerton, Dolphinton, Dunsyre, Lanark, Libberton, Pettinain, Quothquan, Walston and West Calder.

Although the show is a closed show for cattle, sheep, horticultural and industrial, there is still plenty open classes to enter such as Clydesdale Horse, Light Horse and Pony, Pet and Dog Show, Red Hose Race and Shepherd's Crooks and Walking Sticks.
http://www.carnwathagriculturalsociety.com

29-30 July **155th Heckington Show** including Donkey Show
Website: *www.heckingtonshow.org.uk*

30 July **Totnes & District Show**, Devon.
Website: *www.totnesshow.com*

30-31 July **Turriff District Agricultural Association** *http://www.turriffshow.co.uk/*

AUGUST
1 Aug **Lammas Day** (Lughnasadh)

2 Aug **Wigtown Show** at Bladnoch Park, Wigtown, Newton Stewart, Dumfries & Galloway, DG8 9AB
www.wigtownshow.org.uk A poultry display will replace the poultry show for 2023

2-3Aug **Black Isle Show**, Mansfield Showground. ([Preview evening 2nd)
Website: *www.blackisleshow.info*

2-5 Aug **Equifest Arena UK**
Website *equifest.org.uk*

Equifest is firmly established in the UK's equestrian calendar as one of the largest competing events. It has earned its place as a major festival favourite – fun for both competitor and visitor alike!

Founded by Show Director Betsy Branyan in 2008 at East of England Showground, Equifest has grown significantly attracting over 10,000 riders and visitors to come each year to compete, watch, learn and buy.

Regrettably after 15 years, Equifest has had to find a new home following the sale of East of England Showground from 1st July 2023. The show is now in partnership with **Arena UK** in Allington, Lincolnshire and will be held from **2nd to 5th August 2023**.

Equifest has an avid and loyal following and the organisers are passionate about ensuring that competitors and visitors have fun and enjoy the spirit of the annual festival. They look forward to welcoming competitors to our new home to take part in a variety of disciplines that will include Showing, Unaffiliated Show Jumping, Dressage and Carriage Driving.

3 Aug **Burwarton Show**, Shropshire.

Telephone:
Website: *www.burwartonshow.co.uk*.

5 Aug **Cockermouth & District Show**, Cumbria.
Website: *www.cockermouthshow.co.uk*

5 Aug **Cardigan County Show**
Website: *www.cardigancountyshow.co.uk*

5 Aug **138th Blakesley Show**, Towcester, Northamptonshire.
Website: *www.blakesleyshow.co.uk*

5 Aug **Brecon County Show.**
Website: *breconshow@btinternet.com*

5 Aug **Dumfries & Lockerbie Show.**
Website: *dumfriesshow.co.uk*

5 Aug **Emley Show.**
Website: *www. emleyshow.co.uk*.

5 Aug **Garstang Show**, Lancs.
Website: *www.garstangshow.org*

5 Aug **113th Osmotherley & District Horticultural & Agricultural Show.**
Website: *www.osmotherleyshow.co.uk*
5 Aug **Oswestry & District Agricultural Show.**
Website: *www.owestryshow.co.uk*

5 Aug **Pruning Plum Trees** West Raynham, Norfolk www.applesandorchards.co.uk

6 Aug **138th Sykehouse Show.** Telephone: 01405 785349.
Website: *www.sykehouseshow.org.uk*

6 Aug **Tockwith & District Agricultural Show.**
Website: *www.tockwithshow.org.uk*

6 Aug **Wayland Agricultural Show**, Watton, Norfolk
Website: *www.waylandshow.com*

7 Aug **NSA Early Ram Sale**, RWAS Showground,
Builth Wells *www.nationalsheep.org.uk/nsa-ram-sales/main-sales/*

9 Aug **Bute Agricultural Summer Show**, *www.buteagriculturalsociety.co.uk*

10 Aug **Appleby Agricultural Show** *www.appleby-show.co.uk*

10 Aug **Okehampton & District Agricultural Show** *www.okehamptonshow.co.uk*
British Goat Society Recognised Show

11-12 Aug **Royal Manx Agricultural Show** Isle of Man Website *www.royalmanx.com*

12 Aug **Chepstow Show**
Website *www.chepstowshow.co.uk*
12Aug **Dalston Show** Cumbria Website *www.dalstonshow.co.uk* They have introduced new Sheep classes for 2023 – Rylands, Coloured Rylands and Dutch Spotted.

12 Aug **Ellingham & Ringwood Show**
Website *www.ellinghamshow.co.uk*

12 Aug **Halifax Agricultural Show**
Website *www.halifax-agricultural-show.co.uk*

12 Aug **Orkney Agricultural Show**
Website *www.orkneycountyshow.co.uk*

12 Aug **Sedgefield Show**
www.sedgefieldshow.co.uk

12-13 Aug **Chertsey Show** inc donkey show
Website: *www.chertseyshow.co.uk*

THE CHERTSEY SHOW. . . a great day out for all the family....

The only remaining traditional Agricultural Show within the M25!! The Chertsey Show is a fantastic trip out for the whole family with arena events all day, Educational/Demonstration of countryside skill, a whole range of different farm and domestic animals, horticultural and floral tents, traditional crafts and many stalls to browse. And that's not all! Attached to the main show is the Chertsey Horse Show and companion Dog Show, both with their own rings holding competitions and displays all day.

Why not join in?
Don't just come and watch. The show is open to amateur and professional alike. There are over 200 different classes of competition judged over the two days of the show: everything from home-made wine to home grown potatoes, artwork and photographs to household pets and pot plants. Just take the time to browse through the various 'sections' on this website and you'll be bound to find something for you to enter.
And children go free!!

15- 16 Aug **Anglesey County**
Website *www.angleseyshow.org.uk*

16-17 Aug **Gillingham & Shaftesbury, Dorset** *www.gillshaftshow.co.uk*

17 Aug **Denbighshire & Flintshire** Agricultural *www.denbighandflintshow.com*

19 Aug **Ashbourne Show**
Website *www.ashbourneshow.co.uk*

19 Aug **The Donkey Breed Society Championship Show** including driving, working and pet donkeys. Come and find out more about keeping donkeys. Moreton Morrell College, Warwickshire contact *dbstreasurer@donkeybreedsociety.co.uk* or please phone in working hours 01732 864414 *www.donkeybreedsociety.co.uk*

19 Aug **Fillongley Show**, Coventry.
Website: *www.fillongley-show.co.uk*

20 Aug **Mid-Somerset Show** Shepton Mallet Website *www.midsomersetshow.org.uk*

24 Aug **Melplash Show**
www.melplashshow.co.uk

Farming and agriculture really are at the heart of this show and visitors will be able to watch judging of the wonderful animals. They will be building on the success of our Discover Farming marquee – a must visit for all families who are interested in learning more about food production and farming. There will be a number of activities and interactive demonstrations where children of all ages can get hands on experience of a variety of 'Farm to Food' activities. Other competitions include 'banger' competitions and allotment and gardening classes.

26 Aug **Wensleydale Agricultural Show**
Website *www.wensleydaleshow.org.uk*

27-28 Aug **Edenbridge and Oxte**d Surrey
Website *www.edenbridge-show.co.uk*

28 Aug 75th **Epworth Show** nr Doncaster
Website *www.epworthshow.org*
British Goat Society Recognised Show

28 Aug **Aylsham Show**, Norfolk
Website *www.aylshamshow.co.uk*

31-3 September **Burghley Horse Trials**
Website *www.burghley-horse.co.uk*

SEPTEMBER

2 Sep **Alresford Show** Website *www.alresford-agriculturalshow.org.uk*

2 Sep **Harbottle Show**
Website *www.harbottleshow.com*

2 Sep **Keighley & District Agricultural Show** Website *www.keighleyshow.org*
2 Sep **Lladysul Show**
Website *www.sioellandysulshow.co.uk*

2 Sep **Lowick & District Agricultural Show**
Website *www.lowickshow.com*

2-3 Sep **Wolsingham Agricultural Show**
www.wolsinghamshow.co.uk

3 Sep **Kildale Agricultural & Horticultural Show. Yorks**
Website *www.kildaleshow.com*

8-9 Sep **Melton Mowbray, Leics**
Traditional Native Breeds Show and Sale
Website *www.meltonmowbraymarket.co.uk*

8 -9 Sep **181st Stanhope Agricultural Society** *www.stanhopeshow.co.uk*

Always check that the show is running before you travel!

Maintaining their commitment to farmers and smallholders, the organisers of the Edenbridge & Oxted Agricultural Show have been determined to keep livestock showing their priority for 2023.

Their two-day show over the August bank holiday weekend was proud to host over 400 cattle entries in 2022, with 1000 sheep representing more than 40 different breeds. Seeing quality pigs, goats, cattle and sheep up close is a huge attraction for visitors and whilst the rest of the show continues to grow and evolve, livestock showing will always remain at its heart.

This show is a chance for farmers to come together at the close of the season. It's the ideal place for exhibitors to relax a little and enjoy time off the farm with friends. New competition entrants are always welcomed and encouraged, with experienced and friendly stewards keen to grow their sections. Exhibitors camp on site with evening entertainment provided in the bustling Stockman's marquee. Entries are open online until mid-July. New for 2023 are dedicated breed sections for Texels and for Valais Blacknose sheep, and for pigs there are qualifying competitions for Kunukunes, Oxford Sandy & Blacks, Gloucestershire Old Spots, Berkshires, Tamworths and Saddlebacks. Cattle competitions include recently-added interbreed pedigree calf classes along with full sections for pedigree beef, dairy and commercial cattle.

Keeping the event fresh and packed with public has also been a priority for Edenbridge & Oxted, with exciting displays from monster trucks and axemen on the programme for 2023. All the usual additional fun returns too with working gundogs and terriers, local food and drink, a huge showing of vintage tractors and machinery, blacksmiths, farriers, fly fishing, horticulture and an equestrian section spanning five competition rings and featuring qualifiers for HOYS and LIHS.

If you're just looking for a day out then advance public tickets are available for purchase through www.edenbridge-show.co.uk at a discounted rate.

Organic free range poultry can find music soothing from unexpected noises such as wild birds or planes

A Classical Way to Calm Chickens

Hannah Lawrence explains how playing classical music to your chickens could keep them stress-free, as well as relaxed, and how it can also be good for their owners.

A little Chopin to keep your chickens chilled during moulting, a bit of Handel to calm your hen before visiting the vet, or some Bach to help your flock bed down during bonfire night: These are just a few ways in which classical music could improve your feathered friend's mental wellbeing. Classical music for chickens?! Sound a like a shell-shocking idea?! Well, there is something about this genre of music that chickens seem to enjoy, find relaxing, and it even appears to enhance their general health.

CHICKENS HAVE ACUTE HEARING

They can pick up on tones and detect exactly where the sound is coming from – so if a radio or your mobile phone is playing music in the garden, your hens will be pick up on the tune just like they would pick up on the sound of a predator's crow or the coo of a fellow flock member. However, the soothing tones of classical music, or simply something to drown out those everyday more alerting noises like the sound of traffic or aeroplanes overhead, looks to have a positive effect on our feathered friends.

Chickens can become easily spoked or anxious if a predator is about or new hens are introduced to the flock. This can sometimes lower their immune system so anything that can help them relax and stay calm is welcomed. A key indication as to whether your hens are stressed is a drop in egg laying. In 2017 a British free range egg producer divided their hens into two coops and undertook an experiment where they played Classic FM to their hens in one coop and no music in another identical coop. The birds listening to Classic FM showed signs of calmness and they produced on average one extra egg per hen per week.

Hens were shown to prefer nest boxes near radios playing classical music

CHAT OR CLASSICS FOR CHICKENS?

Another study was also untaken by the University of Bristol however, they had slightly different findings. Their studies showed classical music being played to hens didn't particularly enhance egg laying, as had the free-range egg producer, but they found something else – more chickens gravitated towards nest boxes which had classic music playing in them and choose to lay their egg in that particular box, whereas less hens selected the nest box which had modern pop music playing in it. So, based on these investigations it certainly sounds like classical music is having a sound effect on chicken flocks. Nevertheless, Gaynor Davis, head of operations and welfare at the British Hen Welfare Trust, has experimented with various sounds and music, as well as classical, and she has found further results: 'My hens tend to prefer a mix of talk and music, particularly Ken Bruce on Radio 2 and PopMaster! Most commercial caged hens have limited exposure to human contact and can find the world a noisy and scary place initially, and I think the mix of talk and music that you get from radio stations helps to acclimatise the hens to hearing human voices and normal sounds. I tend to stick with Radio Two or Greatest Hits Radio.' Gaynor concluded that she felt ex-battery hens benefited the most from having a radio on playing something, whether classical, a chat show, or random music genres, as opposed to no sounds

15% OFF with exclusive code FARM at **verm-x.com** T&Cs apply*

Verm-X®

Taking care of animal health, naturally.

Award-winning natural poultry care to support your hens.

Support the good bacteria in your bird's microbiome with our unique herbal blend. Verm-X Original promotes excellent gut health, creating a hostile environment for unwanted intestinal burdens.
Containing Thyme, Peppermint, and Slippery Elm, our pelleted formula is OF&G approved for use on organic holdings. We use absolutely no artificial chemical or pharmaceutical ingredients.

Kinder to animals, kinder to the environment.

Intestinal support without chemicals.

OF&G ORGANIC PRODUCT APPROVED FOR RESTRICTED USE

POULTRY DUCKS & FOWL
Pellets
Verm-X ORIGINAL
Restores and maintains gut vitality

- Safe to eat eggs
- Vet approved
- 100% natural herbs
- Intestinal control

Certified B Corporation
Universal Feed Assurance Scheme UFAS UFAS 6007
ETHICAL AWARD THE ETHICAL COMPANY ORGANISATION
VETERINARY APPROVED
OF&G ORGANIC PRODUCT APPROVED FOR RESTRICTED USE
made in the uk
Platinum Trusted Service Award 2023 feefo
LEADING NATURAL ANIMAL CARE 20 YEARS Verm-X® Est. 2002

* T&Cs: This code is for one off purchases only from verm-x.com, it cannot be used against subscriptions.

verm-x.com

Do you wake up every morning wondering if Mrs Fox has been to visit your birds? Tired of trying to recover them from your neighbours garden?

Show us our products advertised ANYWHERE cheaper and we WILL beat that price…

The Garden Life poultry run could be your answer…

Steel Framed Walk-In Poultry Runs

✓ Fully galvanised steel framework
✓ ACQ treated timber door and frame
✓ Door 1.8m high by 750mm wide
✓ Galvanised hinges and bolt
✓ Strong 20gauge hexagonal wire mesh
✓ Optional tough welded mesh
✓ 1 inch or half inch mesh holes
✓ Mesh ground skirt all round
✓ Anchor pegs supplied
✓ Self assembly, shipped by overnight courier

*Please enquire for other areas

SALE NOW ON! 20% OFF ALL RUNS

As seen on BBC's Countryfile

Now available in 2m, 3m, 4m and 6m spans.

Optional mesh upgrades, leg height and roof coverings available

Call John any time on ☎ **01522 740 118 or 0800 832 1962**
Visit us at: **www.gardenlifedirect.co.uk** or Email: **sales@gardenlifedirect.co.uk**

RHODE ROCK, CALDER RANGER, BEECHWOOD BLUE, SUSSEX RANGER & SPECKLEDY, ALSO COMMERCIAL BROWN BREEDS & BROWN EGG LAYERS

DAY OLD AND 16 WEEK OLD PULLETS

- Extensive range of poultry equipment
- Small Orders Welcome
- All Deliveries by Road

black rock chicks

cyril bason

Bank House, Corvedale Rd,
Craven Arms,
Shropshire, SY7 9NG

Tel: (Poultry Division) Craven Arms (01588) 673204/5 • Fax: 673242
Price List on Application **WWW.CYRIL-BASON.CO.UK**

SolwayFeeders
GAME & POULTRY REARING EQUIPMENT

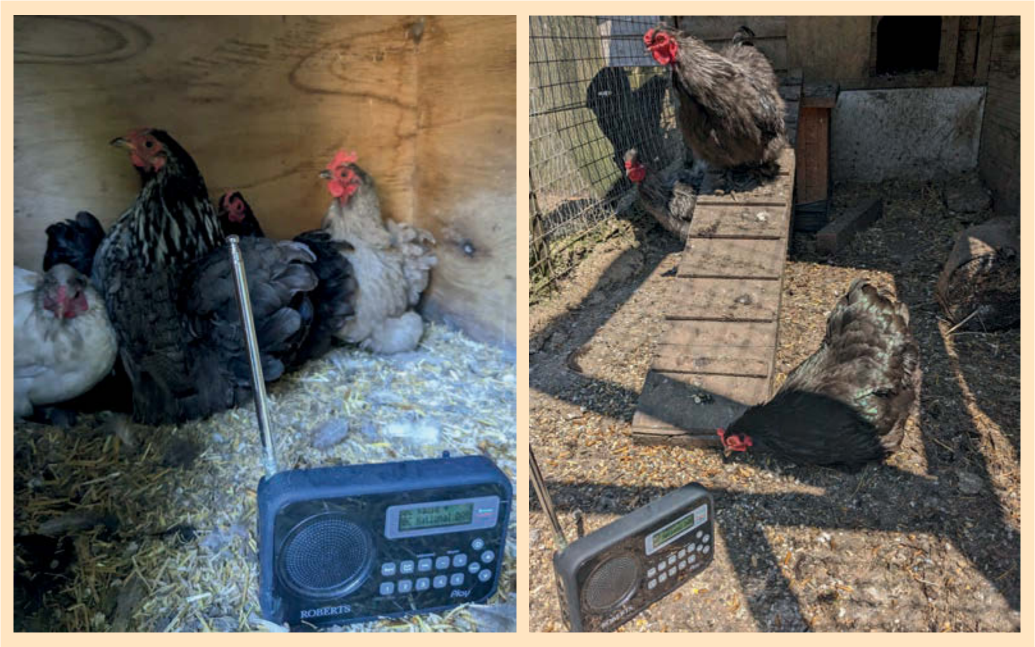
Poultry Specials

Solway Feeders stock a wide range of poultry rearing equipment, including: Feeders, Drinkers, Nest Boxes, Disinfectants, Electric Fencing, Vermin Control, Incubators and much more.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO SEE THE FULL RANGE

Tel: 01557 500253 www.solwayfeeders.com

More traditional chickens than this one, enjoy music



The Editor tried playing music to her bantams who at first were not sure about the radio but became more interested in it quite quickly

at all. 'Music or talking from a radio drowns out more startling sounds like cars or the squawks of wild birds,' Gaynor confirms. She felt this made her girls 'less skittish' and was especially good for ex-commercial chickens when trying to settle into their new home and environment outside a cage.

PUTTING MUSIC INTO PRACTICE

So, placing a radio in your garden for a backyard flock or in a farm for hundreds of hens has positive advantages, but classical music (or Radio Two!) can be used in other stressful situations that chickens may encounter. For instance, a trip to the vets, as well as being put in a chicken carrier, can make the journey traumatic for them. In the same way, the introduction of new hens, moving to new housing or a predator attack can cause stress to your feathered friends. But playing classical music could aid them during these difficult times.

My own chickens do not like sitting in the waiting area when we visit our vets due to strange noises and larger pets also waiting to for their appointment. We wait in the car for our appointment with a classical CD playing gently in the background. I have found my hens are much calmer and more relaxed when we are called in to see the vet.

Anyone who owns a cat or dog knows the noise from fireworks can be a big ordeal for them. However, loud bangs can also affect chickens, as already mentioned, they have acute hearing so can be just as upset during bonfire night as furry pets. Associating loud sounds with danger, most hens will become scared or run for cover and feel extremely stressed for as long as the fireworks continue. For this reason, housing your flock as soon as it is dusk on bonfire night is very important, but you could also try tuning your radio into a classical music station for them in a bid to drown out the loud bangs and to allow the soothing tones to calm your flock. Having carried an experiment out on my own hens, I concluded that Classic FM is a favourite radio station of my chickens. During firework night, I placed a radio, tuned into Classic FM, outside the coop as it got dusk. This was before any fireworks were let off. I checked on my chickens throughout the night (gently and quietly so not to startle them) and all seemed well. The next morning I was pleased to find very happy and relaxed hens, all unaffected by the night before, and jumping out of the coop with enthusiasm as usual.

DOES CLASSICAL MUSIC HELP HEN OWNERS?

Now that your chickens are chilled and enjoying classical music, but what about you? Why not join your flock when they are listening to their favourite tracks or radio station? As well as classical music helping hens and other animals, studies also show humans can boost their wellbeing by listening to these soothing and calming tones. Classical music can aid human brain function as well as reducing pain and help healing. As with chickens, this type of music can relax people, and for humans, it can also help you sleep. With so many benefits to listening to classical tunes, sit with your feathered friends and enjoy each other's company.

Maybe you could get a classical music quartet to practice near your hens!

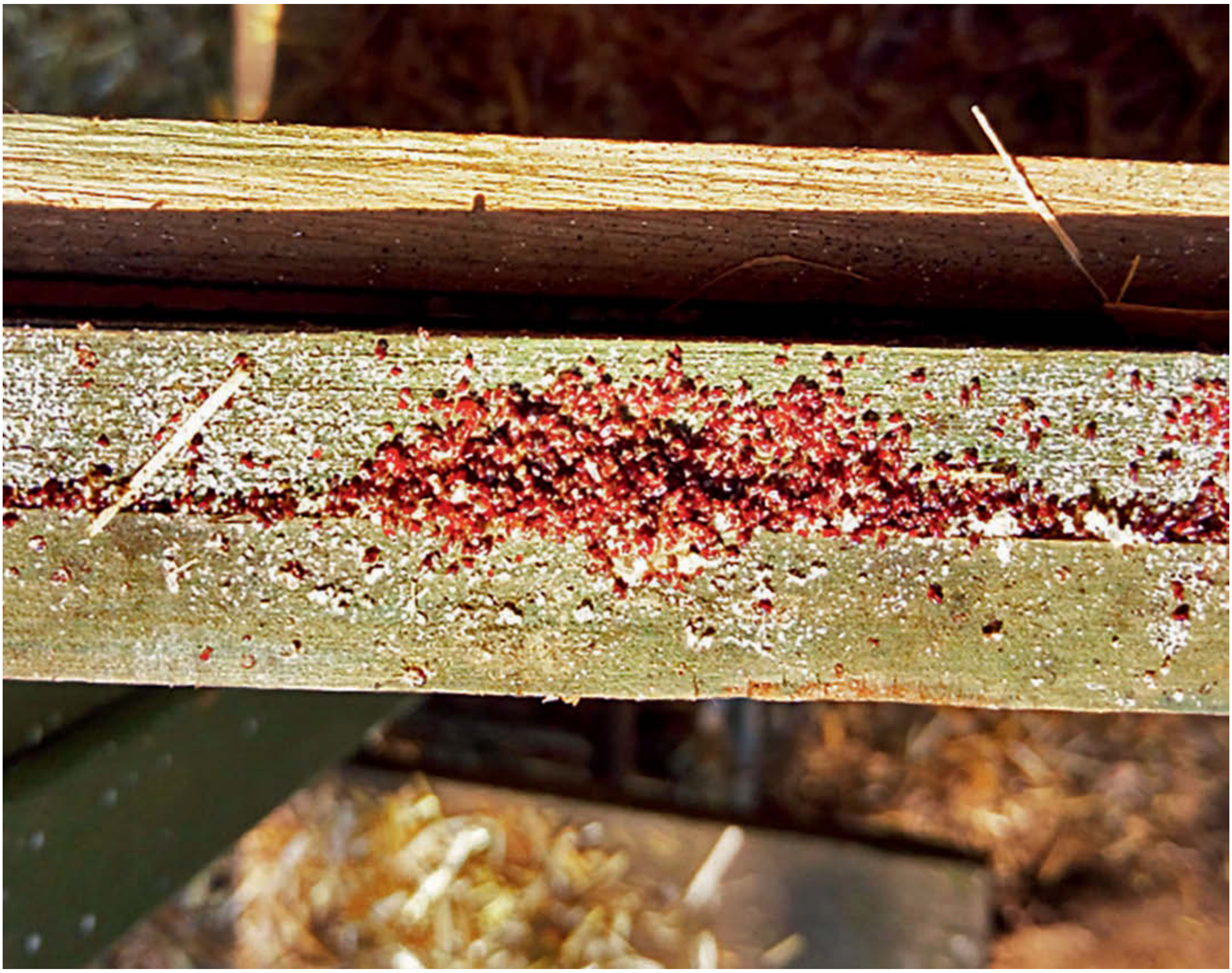
Spending time with your girls is beneficial for both you and them – hens love human interaction, plus being around hens is good for your health. Watching your hens going about their everyday 'chicken routine' like preening, pecking and listening to their little squawks and coos, can have a positive effect on people. It can lower blood pressure, relax you, and is excellent for your mental health. Combining this with some classical music, it is a win-win situation for both chicken and chicken keeper.

MAKE IT A CLASSICALLY CALM FUTURE

So, introduce your hens to some Mozart, Beethoven or Brahms – it could well become a classical way for you to bring calm and enrich your chickens - and you never know, you might even find yourself enjoying some soothing tones with them and also reaping the benefits of a less stressful life too.

The menace of a ruthless, blood sucking fowl foe

How to keep red mite at bay this summer



Red mite are most visible once they have had a feed and turn bright red.

The weather has finally turned for the better but, while we rejoice in the fact we can swan around in shorts and T-shirts, hotter temperatures bring with them unwanted visitors.

Red mite are the bane of a hen keeper's life and, if not dealt with quickly enough, can cause serious health implications for our pet hens. However, with some preventative action it is possible to keep red mite away or, at the very least, under control.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

1. Routine cleaning avoids a build-up of dirt and dust in the corners of hen houses where red mite love to hide. Cleaning this away stops them congregating and means your hens can sleep safe in the knowledge they won't get a peck in the night.
2. Quarantining new hens minimises the chance of red mite spreading between the two flocks, as well as making the transition easier for your new pets.
3. Use Diatomaceous Earth in your hen house, paying particular attention to the cracks and crevices. The powder will scratch the mites' waxy outer shell causing them to dehydrate and die.
4. Encourage regular dust bathing by providing a space for your hens to do this. Adding Diatomaceous Earth into the soil is a great way of allowing the hens

HEN OF THE MONTH

BHWT Hen of the month - Meet Ruth, who is clearly a resilient little hen with a zest for life in spite of a twisted beak

to treat themselves for red mite too.

5. Keep your hens' feed under cover or do what you can to stop wild birds accessing it – a common way of your hens picking up red mite is through contact with wild birds.
6. Change your clothes if you've been to visit a fellow hen keeper, just in case they unknowingly have a case of red mite.

Now we know how to keep red mite at bay, but if they've still worked their way in, how do you spot them? If you've got an infestation in your hen house the first sign will be a reluctance by your hens to go into it at nighttime, but there are ways and means of discovering these pesky critters before things get that serious.

Pop a square of white towelling in the corner of your hen house – if it turns a reddish-brown colour by morning well, yep you guessed it, red mite are the cause. You can also run your finger along the underside of perches, being mindful of splinters. If red mite are present you will either have smears of blood on your hand or live mites.

So what next? Here are our top tips for eradicating red mite from your hen house:

TOP TIPS TO BANISH MITE

1. Clean clean clean – sweep out all the bedding in the hen house and strip it of as much material as you possibly can. Remove as many parts of the coop as you can, such as perches, pop holes and anything else that will unscrew easily.
2 Treat the whole hen house, and the parts you took out, with a red mite spray such as Chicken Vet's Dergal concentrate or Nettex Total Mite Kill Spray and leave this to soak for 10-15 minutes.
3. Then, power wash the entire house, getting into every nook and cranny as best you can, before leaving it to dry.
4. Check the house again for mites and repeat the process if you see any still lurking.
5. Once it is entirely dry you can dust the house with Diatomaceous Earth, a non-toxic powder which will kill any remaining mites.

We would advise wearing old clothes and washing these immediately after cleaning your hen house, as well as taking a shower yourself. Red mite can remain on you and your clothing for some time, causing irritation if not removed.

As with any pests, prevention is key, so make sure you take as much action as possible to avoid these little critters making their way into your hen house this summer.

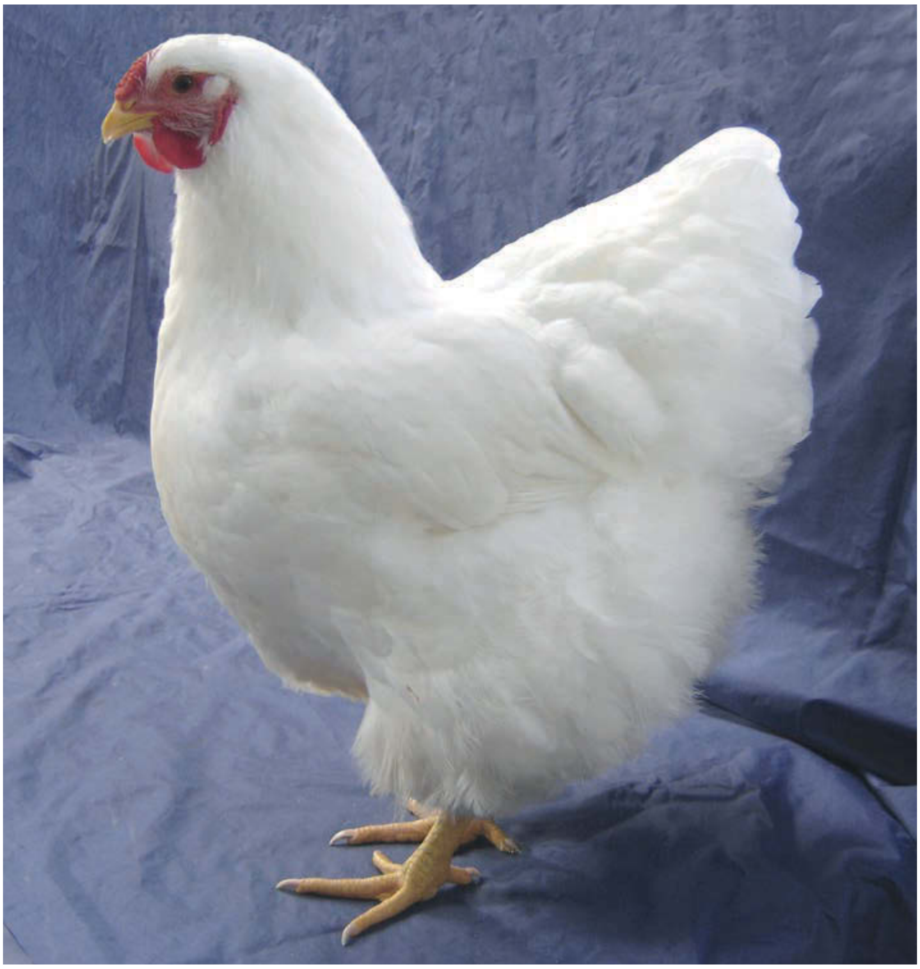
BHWT

The British Hen Welfare Trust (BHWT) was established in 2005 by Jane Howorth MBE and is Britain's first registered charity concerned with rehoming laying hens while improving hen welfare across commercial and domestic sectors. We believe that pet hens matter; everything we do is to improve the welfare of our feathered friends and introduce more people to the joys of hen-keeping.

- Every year, with support from over 1,200 volunteers at 46 pop-up sites, we rehome over 50,000 hens saved from slaughter. To date we've rehomed over 918,000 hens.
- We educate consumers to help them make informed choices when shopping. For example, about caged eggs hidden in processed foods and the problem of using large eggs, rather than small or mixed weight.
- We work closely with government agencies and veterinary institutions to develop programmes and practices to improve hen welfare in both the commercial and domestic sectors.
- We offer a wealth of information and guidance online and offer a free 'Hen Helpline' service to all hen keepers needing advice on caring for sick chickens.
- We have also developed an educational programme providing resources to schools to help pupils explore the connections between food, farming, and animal welfare.
- We work with academic researchers to facilitate ground-breaking studies into pet hens and provide grants to vets and veterinary students to conduct research into chickens to build evidence-based data about how best to care for pet hens.

Hard or Soft Feather?

Grant Brereton takes a look at the different feather categories with pure breed chickens...



White Wyandottes can get away with a little fluff creeping into the thigh area

When I got into poultry seriously in the late 90s, it was a bit of a foggy experience to really penetrate what seemed like, for many years, a non-existent world to me. Imagine there being all sorts of different keepers of every pure breed you could think of or had read about in books. Imagine being friends with many of those people and really being immersed in that world. But, at the time, that's all I could do - imagine!

With no social media or smartphones, my journey into pure chickens would be a slow one. It started by looking up 'for sale' ads in the local free ads paper, or in the back of esteemed publications like this one. Friendships were born and there was no going back - I'd entered 'chicken world' and was here to stay!

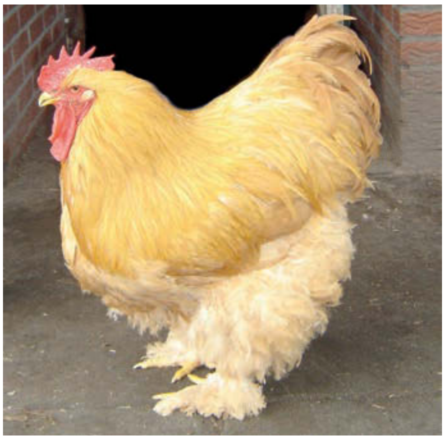
However, the road ahead would be long with many lessons along the way. My problem is, once I learn a snippet of information or lesson the hard way, I have this innate need to share with others and prevent them from making the same mistakes. I guess that's just part of being human. But I do (or did) have this tendency to come across as 'the expert' without always earning the necessary stripes. I'd certainly never refer to myself as such; I prefer 'seasoned enthusiast.'

AM I SOFT?

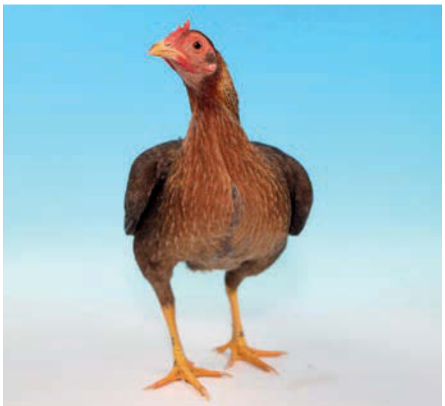
Where am I going with this? Well, let's just say I was well and truly humbled (or rumbled) in my local pub one night many years ago, which was a great lesson for me. I was two-three years into my new era of keeping and breeding purebred poultry. As you can imagine, by now I had visited rare breed centres and a few sales, so accessing these birds was relatively easy (compared to how it used to appear). I fancied so many different breeds, colour varieties, sizes and styles of poultry that I soon had 'a lot on.'

So we're in the pub, friends and girlfriend all stood round with drinks. Me fancying myself as a bit of a chicken expert and then it happened... my punk rocker friend introduced me to another chicken keeper. She said (or shouted): "Grant, meet X... he's mad about chickens too!" Then she was off to the juke box to put on yet another Ramones offering. X seemed a bit, well let's just say, 'not the friendliest!' His first words uttered: "So, what do you keep then, hard or soft feather?" There, with one quick question, I was rumbled. I recall thinking, 'oh gosh I simply don't know... how to get out of this one?' I couldn't!

After hearing my extensive list of breeds and colours within them, X proceeded to inform me that I indeed kept 'soft feather' varieties and that hard-feathered chickens tended to be the Game fowl. An 'aha' moment and a quick lesson (despite the humiliation); I now understood that

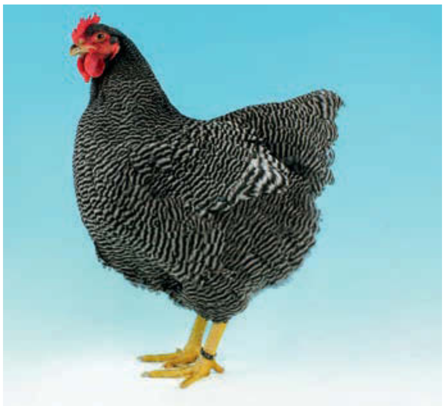


A magnificent Buff Cochin showing really soft feather

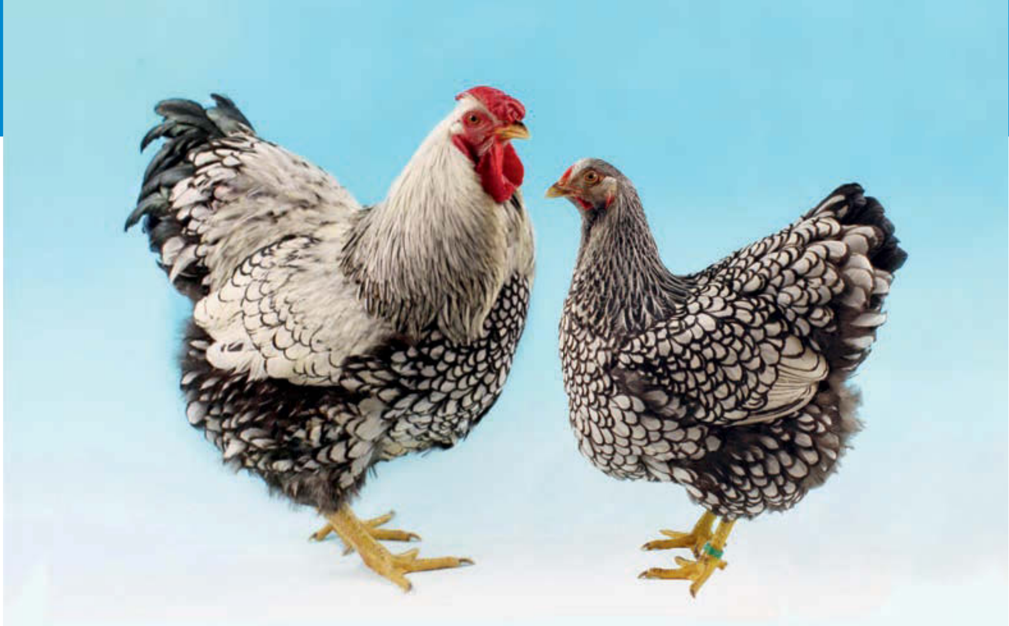


A Partridge Old English Game female demonstrating the scant feather on the upper breast leading to the keel bone

A Pile Leghorn bantam male - another soft feather variety



A large Barred Rock female - the pattern requiring very specific feather type to really express the precise barring



Large Silver Laced Wyandottes - patterns like this need good webbed thigh feathers to complete the overall effect

there was 'hard or soft feather' varieties of poultry from which to choose.

DELVING DEEPER...

So it would appear quite simple - a Game bird such as Old English Game is hard feather, and an Asiatic-derived Cochin is soft feather. These examples would be fairly obvious to those considering the feather types of both specimens - based entirely on their visual appearance. The Old English Game is tight-feathered, and some specimens even have little feather coverage on their keel (breast) bones. By marked contrast, the Cochin has a profusion of feathers all over, including the legs and feet. These feathers are very soft and sometimes can give an overall impression (an optical illusion) of a bigger bird than actually lies beneath.

So really, it would be more accurate to say that rather than completely different animals, the hard or soft feather labels arose depending on where each pure breed stood on the feather spectrum. There are certainly many breeds that could be classed as 'not so obvious' to label. But we're human, so we tend to say that if you're not in one camp, you must be in the other.

If we put our focus heads on for a minute, it doesn't take much to realise that many breeds vary (even if slightly) on the feather spectrum within the available plumage varieties. Take an obvious 'soft feather' variety like the Wyandotte, where, in general, the Whites in the UK are more profusely feathered than the other Wyandotte varieties. Because there is no plumage pattern to consider in the White, then feather zones can morph subtly or dramatically, depending on what is deemed acceptable or necessary. Close inspection of some White Wyandottes reveals that the fluff below the vent often creeps (almost like ground elder) around the corner to the thigh area. So in other words 'non-webbed' thigh feathers, which are a big no no in patterned breeds, where you need the larger end part of the feather to be webbed (in order for the respective pattern to be expressed).

So let's say a Buff Cochin would be softer feathered than a White Wyandotte, but a White Wyandotte would be softer feathered than a Silver Laced Wyandotte, which would be softer feathered than a Barred Plymouth Rock. But all are in the 'soft feather' category. There are just specific differences between them based entirely on each individual breed's standard, and what is required from the feathers, to allow for the most desirable representations to be produced.

MANY CONSIDERATIONS

Each overall plumage effect in terms of feather density, will be based on a number of factors. In my view, 'natural selection' comes first, so in other words feathers morphed/evolved in any number of ways to accommodate the natural environmental conditions of the inhabitants. Take the Chantecler fowl - a Canadian breed that is famed for being able to withstand really cold temperatures. On close inspection you can see that the 'fluffy' under parts of the body feathers are longer than many other soft feather breeds, which is believed by keepers to help insulate them during really cold periods.

So take the aforementioned 'under-feather' and then you've got feather width, length, structure, shape, profusion, colour (or lack of), growth rate, growth angle, plus environmental and dietary influences, and there's a lot going on. We select, almost invariably, for what visually pleases us. If we look at many breeds, there's almost always one particular variety that is the epitome of that breed, leaving the other colour options falling somewhat short. The reasons for one variety excelling in terms of 'ideal breed specimen' could be many and varied, including fashion or popularity, but in my view, plumage and the attainability of which, likely plays a part too. That along with the undeniable mix of breeds in each variety's ancestry, and the challenge is really on to get them all the same shape, size and conformation.

Really, it would have been easier if my new friend 'X' in the pub had just asked what breeds I kept in the first place, but then I suppose I wouldn't have expanded my knowledge. You could question the need to know this information, but it will serve in your best interests when entering a show, for example. When shows return, will your breed be a contender for best hard or soft feather? Time will tell. Some quick research as to what variety of 'feather' you keep, will soon give the answer.

QUIZ:

Which of the following breeds are soft feather:

Plymouth Rock
Leghorn
Orpington
Wyandotte
Asil
Pekin

the domestic fowl trust
Est. 1976

QUALITY HOUSES THAT STAND THE TEST OF TIME

Our Poultry Houses are designed and made by us at our workshop here in the West Midlands

We deliver nationwide and erect them for you in your garden

DIY Walk-In Hen Run kits £60.00

Budget House £129.99

Hen Coop Standard £299.00

MADE IN THE UK

Chalet Hen House £299.00

Hen Coop Deluxe
£399.00

Grand Chalet Hen House
£499.00

Half Pint Penthouse Chicken House
£499.00

Classic 10 Poultry Housing
£499.00

Half-way Penthouse Chicken House
£599.00

Stretched Penthouse Chicken House £999.00

Classic 20 Poultry Housing
£699.00

Octagonal Garden Hen Houses from
£799

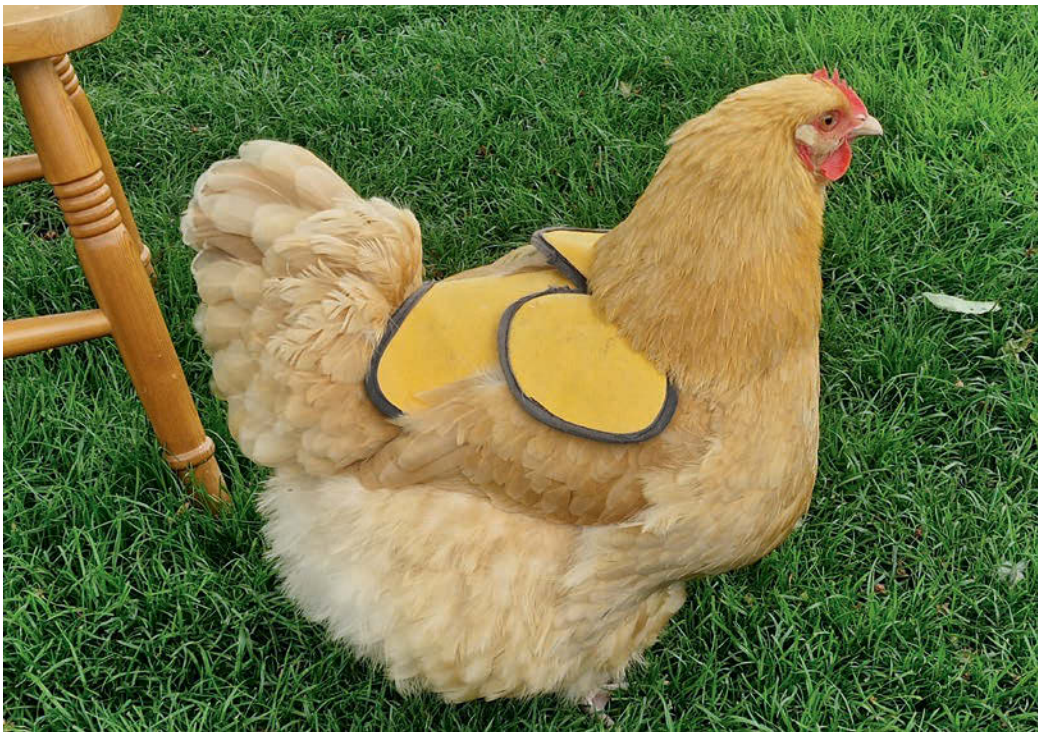
Walk In Hen Houses from
£1199

THIS IS A SMALL SELECTION OF OUR PRODUCTS - PLEASE CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE FOR THE FULL RANGE!

Opening Hours: Mon to Fri 09:30 to 16:00 | Sat & Sun Closed (Closed Bank Holiday Monday)
Snitterfield Lane, Snitterfield, Stratford Upon Avon CV37 0LP

☎ **01789 850046** **www.domesticfowltrust.co.uk**

PRICES CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRINT



Chicken saddles provide feather wear protection

A Guide to Chicken Saddles

When Fiona & Hugh Osborne were first introduced to the concept of chicken saddles it conjured up images of chickens racing across a field with tiny little jockeys bobbing up and down on their backs. A very comical image but chicken saddles are an incredibly important tool to chicken breeders or anyone who has a flock with a cock bird or cockerel.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A SADDLE?

The photograph on the right shows a basic saddle fitted to a hen. Essentially, it's simply a piece of heavy canvas that sits on a hens' back passing under the wings. There's a material tape at the top of the saddle that fits over the hen's wings securing it in place.

Cock birds and cockerels will tread the hens in their flock to mate. They do this by standing on the back of the hens placing their feet sometimes as high at the top of the hens' wing. Their aim is to bring their cloaca in contact with the hen's cloaca.

Whether you breed chickens and have a purpose for any fertilised eggs that result, or simply want a male bird in your flock, there is a hormonal imperative for the cockerel to tread the hens. The problem comes when treading becomes excessive. Each time a male chicken climbs on the back of a hen, he will be rubbing away at the feathers on a hens' back. The more that this happens, the more damage there will be to the feathers. In extreme cases the hen 's feathers will be worn away completely and they'll be left with a bald spot on their back.

The saddles are secured in place over the wings

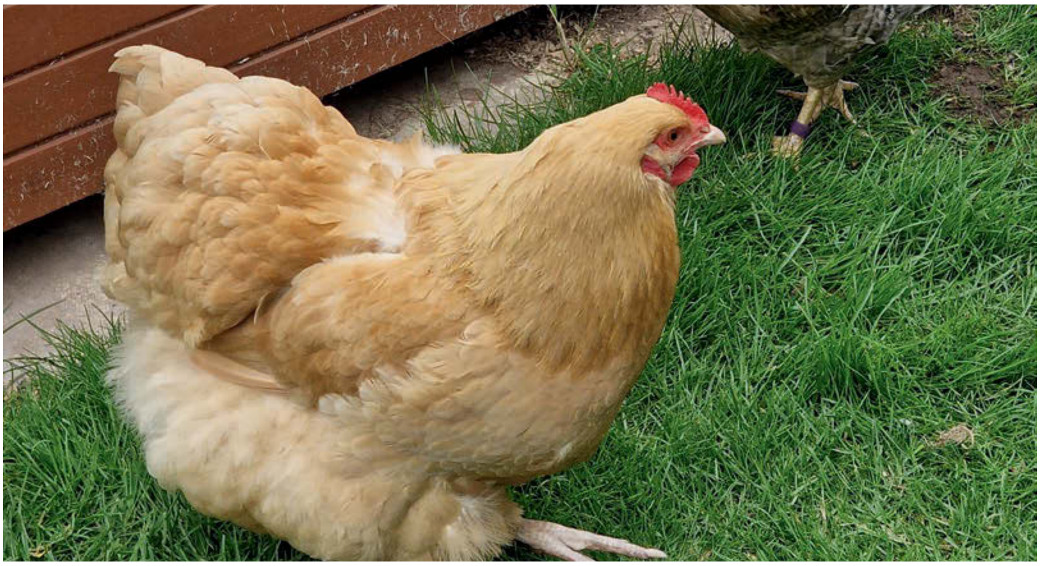
A cock bird mates by climbing on a hens' back

A chicken saddle forms a protective pad between the cock bird's feet and the hens back reducing the risk of feather wear. It can make the act of treading more comfortable for the hens too as the cock birds claws no longer have direct contact with their backs.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF FEATHER WEAR

So what? Just imagine what a bald spot would mean to a chicken. Imagine a hot summer day with blazing sunshine. Any human that is going to be in the sunshine for many hours would most likely use some kind of sun protection to prevent sunburn whether that's sun cream, a hat, a shirt or sun block. A chicken's skin has the same risk of sunburn as a human's so a bald spot can have grave consequences.

The chicken saddle isn't designed to provide that sun protection. What's it's designed to do is to prevent or at least significantly reduce the risk of feather wear happening in the first place. It's essentially a physical barrier between the cock bird's feet and the hens back.



The early signs of feather wear with down feathers visible on the hen's back

IS A CHICKEN SADDLE A 100% SOLUTION TO FEATHER WEAR?

Unfortunately, we're so sorry, but no. It's possible that the cock bird will manage to inadvertently get his feet underneath a saddle. As a result, feather wear won't be prevented but it will be significantly reduced.

ARE THERE OTHER WAYS OF PREVENTING FEATHER WEAR?

The risks of feather wear can be minimised in the flock overall by:

- Increasing the number of hens per cock bird
- Increasing the space available to the flock.

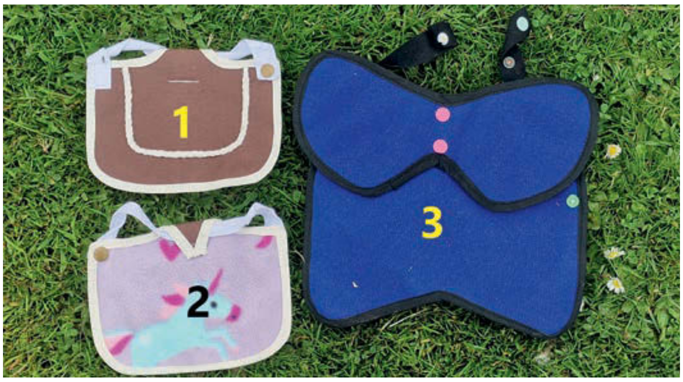
Although this will reduce the risk of feather wear in the flock overall, cock birds will still select a favourite hen. This year in our flock it was Taffy. Our young cockerel actively sought her out and in flockdown (the Avian Influenza Housing Order imposed on 6th November 2022), when we had 11 hens and 1 cockerel in large 21m x 3m enclosure, Taffy had no way to remove herself from his romantic advances. Fitting her with a saddle was essential. In reality, due to the reduced space this normally free ranging group had, every Orpington hen in the group needed to be fitted with a saddle by the end of flockdown.

SIZING A CHICKEN SADDLE

A well fitted saddle is incredibly important for a hen both for function and comfort.

There are two measurements that matter. The first is the width measured from under a wing to under the other wing. As the saddle is secured via a tape that passes over each wing, too loose and the saddle will slip off but too tight and it will be uncomfortable.

Most saddles that are sold come with a tape that is too long, but this is better than too short; a tape can be shortened, but can't be made longer! If you find that the saddle keeps slipping off, a small dart can be sewn in the tape to shorten it. This might need to be repeated until the saddle no longer falls off.



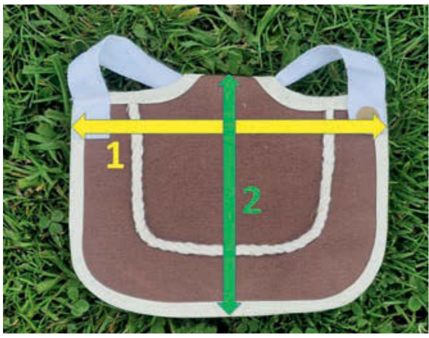
The different formats of saddles

The second measurement is arguably more important. The length from the shoulder blades to the uropygial gland at the base of the hen's tail should dictate the size of saddle for the hen.

The uropygial gland is situated at the base of a chicken's tail. We have answered many questions over the years from social media followers who are new chicken keepers worried that their chickens have potentially dangerous growths when they first find the uropygial gland. It's an important part of the chicken's anatomy as it produces the protective oil that the chickens use to preen their feathers, keeping them in tip top condition.

As a result, a chicken saddle must be long enough to cover the back of the hen, but not so long than it prevents the hen from accessing the uropygial gland for preening. Each hen is different so careful measuring before purchase is important for each individual. We have a stock of four different sizes as, for example, both our Cream Legbars and our Orpingtons wear two different sizes within the breed dependent on the size of the hens.

FORMATS OF CHICKEN SADDLES



The two measurements that are important to sizing saddles

Chicken Saddles come in many different formats and the photograph below shows some variations:

1. A basic canvas saddle
2. A fleece lined saddle
3. A "butterfly" saddle

Which is best? The choice is yours and it differs based on circumstances within your flock.

The Basic Saddle: This is the most cost-effective solution and does the job in reducing feather wear very well.

The Fleece Lined Saddle: This is our preferred saddle. It adds an extra layer of protection as a landing spot for the cock birds' feet when he treads. We feel it's also softer against the feathers than the basic saddle. It's possible it makes no difference at all, but we prefer it.

The Butterfly Saddle: This format adds some extra protection across the top of the hens' wings. This is a format that is preferrable if you have a cock bird who treads very high on the hens' backs. In this case the feathers at the shoulder joint can be worn away and a Butterfly Saddle will reduce this risk.

● Want to know more – talk to us on social media

YouTube
https://www.youtube.com/EnglishcountryLife

Twitter
Smallholding *https://twitter.com/engcountrylife*

Chickens *https://twitter.com/TheFloofLady*

Instagram
Smallholding *https://www.instagram.com/engcountrylife/*

Chickens *https://www.instagram.com/theflooflady/*

Brinsea
ChickSafe

ChickSafe Eco and Advance
automatic hen house door openers…
protect your birds when you can't

- Brinsea have re-designed the hen house door opener from scratch. The NEW ChickSafe Eco and Advance patented designs have only one moving part and no mechanical switches for the ultimate in rugged reliability and ease of use.
- A tough two-piece alloy door is also available.
- **3 year FREE guarantee** *(subject to online registration)*

Visit **www.brinsea.co.uk/ChickSafe**
or call **0345 226 0120** for details

THREE YEAR GUARANTEE
MADE IN BRITAIN

Prices from £79.95

Brinsea Products Ltd – bringing innovation to chicken keepers for over 40 years!

BRINSEA.COM AD01
10:23 BAT>
OK
ChickSafe ADVANCE
Brinsea
ChickSafe eco
Brinsea
ChickSafe

Copdock Mill
Quality since 1912

MIXED CORN
Classic poultry favourite for garden chickens

Order Now!

High in fat, an ideal a source of energy

Helps maintain strong egg shells

Blended at our mill in Suffolk, England

COPDOCK MILL
WHOLESALE

Wholesale Customers
www.copdockmill.co.uk

GLADWELLS
PET AND COUNTRY STORE

Retail Customers
www.gladwellspet.co.uk

Copdock Mill
MIXED CORN
A FINEST BLEND OF WHEAT AND CUT MAIZE
MIXED CORN

farmacy

CALL TODAY
FOR SAVINGS
ON SHEEP
VACCINES

Quote code: **CSSV23**

Use Medicines Responsibly (www.noah.co.uk/responsible). All prices quoted excluding VAT. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offers or discounts. Offers subject to availability. Offer prices valid until 31st July 2023.

Call: 01306 628215 | farmacy.co.uk/CSSV23 **Follow us:** @FarmacyVetMeds

Oxford Sandy & Black
Pig Society
Established 1985

BRITISH PIG ASSOCIATION BPA

Official Breed Club for
Oxford Sandy & Black Pigs

The **Oxford Sandy and Black Pig Society** is the only breed club for OSB pigs recognised by the BPA and affiliated with them.

WWW.OXFORDSANDYPIGS.CO.UK [redacted] @OXFORDSANDYBLK

Pigs are highly sociable animals and should be kept with their own kind

Pot-bellied pigs, Kune Kunes and micro pigs need different feeding to more traditional breeds

Joanna Palmer, nutritionist for Smallholder Range offers timely advice on feeding these types of pigs to keep them happy, healthy and in ideal body condition.

PREVENT OBESITY

By their very nature, most pigs have voracious appetites and will hungrily devour any food that is offered, but these heathy appetites will inevitably lead to an expanding waistline! The Maori translation for Kune Kune is "fat and round" and the Pot-Bellied name alone clearly indicates these breeds have a natural tendency to be stocky and well-covered. However, when keeping Kune Kunes, Pot-Bellies, micro pigs and any other breeds as pets it is important to prevent excessive weight gain as obesity can have serious long term health implications and cause foot and joint problems from excessive weight bearing. Keeping your pigs at healthy body weights by encouraging them to move around, avoiding the temptation to over feed them and using body condition scoring to assess their weight is key to preventing obesity.

BODY CONDITION SCORING

Body condition scoring is a useful hands-on tool for assessing the muscle and fat coverage of an animal to determine their overall condition. Pigs should be assessed over the shoulders, ribs, spine and hips through a combination of sight and touch using the palm of the hand. At a healthy weight and condition a pig will have a spine that can be felt when you run your hand firmly along its back. A spine that can be seen or felt very easily with a light touch indicates that the pig is thin, whereas a pig with a spine that cannot be felt even with firm pressure is likely to be overweight. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is emaciated and 5 is obese, you should aim to keep your pigs at a healthy body condition score of 3.

Pet pigs can give great pleasure to their owners

FEED A HIGH FIBRE, LOW CALORIE FEED

In the wild Pot-Bellied pigs and Kune Kunes thrive on a high fibre diet that consists mainly of grass, nuts, berries, insects, fruits and vegetables. These types of pigs should not be fed commercial pig diets as the high protein and energy levels of these feeds are likely to lead to fast growth and excessive weight gain. Instead, Smallholder Range Pot-Bellied Pig Food has been specifically formulated to combat the problem of obesity in all types of pigs that do not require a specific rearing or breeding feed. With a higher fibre content and lower calorie and protein levels, Pot-Bellied Pig Food will provide a nutritionally balanced diet, including the essential vitamins and minerals your pigs need. As a maintenance diet, an adult pig will need to eat between 1 and 2% of its bodyweight per day in total feed, so it is important to weigh your pigs or be able to make an accurate estimate of their bodyweights in order to feed them appropriate quantities.

SUPPLEMENTING THE DIET AND ENCOURAGING FORAGING BEHAVIOUR

With Kune Kunes likely originating from the tropical islands of Asia and Pot-Bellied Pigs from Vietnam, their natural diets are likely to be a little more exotic than we can offer in the UK! Nonetheless, supplementing their bagged feed with a variety of fruits and vegetables including apples, pears, soft fruit, lettuce, cucumbers, root vegetables and greens makes for happy pigs! These additional feedstuffs should be included in the recommended feeding quantities of 1-2% of each pig's bodyweight, and the amount of Pot-Bellied

Care should always be taken to ensure that every member of the herd receives their fair share of feed

Providing your pigs with as much outside space as possible will allow them to fulfil their natural foraging behaviour

In the wild Pot-Bellied pigs and Kune Kunes thrive on a high fibre diet that consists mainly of grass, nuts, berries, insects, fruits and vegetables

You can hide food to make it more interesting for the pig to find

Pig Food adjusted accordingly. All feed should be split into several smaller meals and fed at intervals throughout the day. Placing feed in several different areas of the pigs' enclosure and even hiding some will encourage their foraging instincts and help to alleviate boredom by extending feeding time. Fibre in the form of grass, hay and straw should be available to provide gut fill and to prevent constipation.

Providing your pigs with as much outside space as possible will allow them to fulfil their natural foraging behaviour, which encourages exercise, and in turn burns calories and helps to keep bodyweights in check. Depending on what natural food there is available within their enclosure, pigs can further supplement their diet with brambles, earthworms, acorns and other seasonal produce such as windfall fruit.

Pigs are highly sociable animals and should be kept in the company of their own kind where they will form a herd hierarchy. Care should always be taken to ensure that every member of the herd receives their fair share of feed as the more timid animals are likely to be bullied away from food by the dominant leaders. Ensuring adequate trough space or spreading feed out across a large area will help to reduce competition at feeding times.

A constant supply of clean, fresh water is also essential. In the heat of summer, even small breed pigs can drink large quantities, so if you do not have self-filling waterers you will need to fill up their water source several times a day to prevent dehydration. In winter, the ice on troughs should be broken regularly and pipes well insulated to allow pigs adequate water intake.

DO NOT FEED KITCHEN SCRAPS

ALLEN & PAGE
SPECIALIST FEEDS
POT-BELLIED PIG FOOD
APPROVED BY THE POT-BELLIED PIG CLUB

Whilst supplementing your pigs' diet with additional fruits and vegetables is actively encouraged, it is important to remember that to prevent the introduction and spread of potentially devastating notifiable animal diseases, such as Foot & Mouth, it is illegal to feed catering waste, kitchen scraps, meat or meat products to farmed animals. This also means that any fruit and vegetables you intend to feed your pigs cannot enter your kitchen or be purchased from an establishment that also sells meat, and you most certainly cannot feed your pigs any leftovers from the family dinner table!

For more information on feeding your pigs contact the friendly Smallholder Range Advice Line on 01362 822900 or visit www.smallholderfeed.co.uk

Give your baby chicks the best start with quality nutrition

A specially-formulated feed that encourages natural growth rates.

Baby Chick Crumbs is an ideal feed from hatching through to 6-8 weeks. To help a smooth change over to Poultry Grower Pellets, we recommend mixing the two feeds from 5-6 weeks.

Nutritionally balanced **with vitamins and minerals**

Includes added **herbs and seaweed**

No coccidiostats or growth promoters

Prebiotics to **help support digestive health**

NON GM INGREDIENTS
APPROVED
SMALL HOLDER RANGE
NO Hexane Extracted Ingredients
WITH OMEGA 3 OILS
BABY CHICK CRUMBS
ESPECIALLY FOR THE SMALL HOLDER

Vegetarian Society APPROVED

NON GM INGREDIENTS

For friendly and helpful feeding advice, contact our nutrition helpline today on 01362 822902

smallholderfeed.co.uk

By Appointment to HRH The Prince of Wales Producer & Supplier of Organic & Non GM Animal Feeds Allen & Page Ltd, Norfolk

SMALL HOLDER RANGE®

The COUNTRY SMALLHOLDER Order Form

Offer code CSH23

☐ **YES!** I would like to Subscribe to The Country Smallholder magazine

☐ **UK - every 6 months for £24 - saving 26% via Direct Debit**

☐ **UK – 1 year (13 issues) by cheque or debit/credit card at £50, saving 23%**

For international offers, please visit **shop.kelsey.co.uk/CSH23**

YOUR DETAILS

Title .... **First name** ....

Surname ....

Address ....

....

Postcode ....

Mobile ....

Email ....

Direct Debit

☐ **I would like to pay £24 every 6 months by Direct Debit, saving 26%** (please complete the direct debit form below)

☐ **I WISH TO SUBSCRIBE BY DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENTS OF £24 FOR MY FIRST 6 ISSUES. I UNDERSTAND THAT MY SUBSCRIPTION WILL CONTINUE AT THE SAME LOW RATE WITH PAYMENTS TAKEN EVERY 6 MONTHS - UNLESS I WRITE TO TELL YOU OTHERWISE.**

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

Name of Bank ....

Address ....

.... **Postcode** ....

Account name ....

Sort code ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐ **Account number** ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Signature .... Date ....

Originator's Id number 8 3 7 3 8 3

Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Kelsey Publishing Ltd. and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank or Building Society.

Debit/credit card

Please debit my ☐ Visa ☐ Visa Debit ☐ Mastercard

☐ **UK – 1 year (13 issues) at £50 - saving 23%**

Card number ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

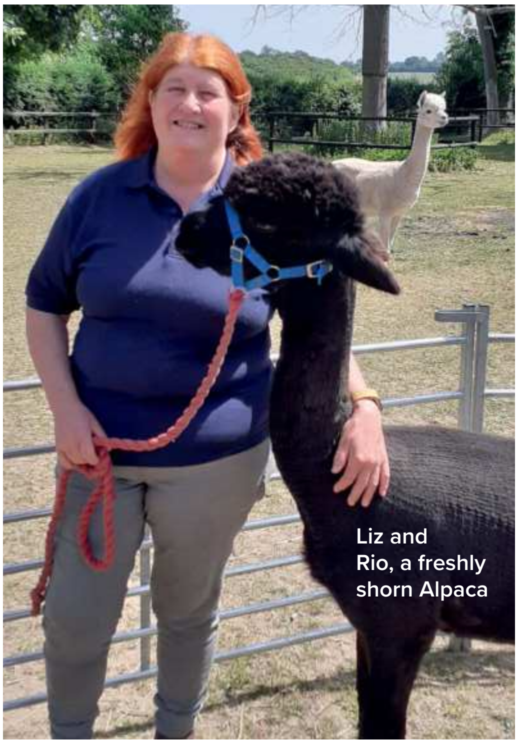
CVS ☐☐☐ **Expiry date** M M Y Y

Cheque

I enclose a cheque for £50 made payable to Kelsey Publishing Limited (must be from a UK bank account. Please write your name and address on the back of the cheque).

(UK ONLY) Please send completed form to: FREEPOST KELSEY MEDIA

Terms & conditions: *Offer available for UK Direct Debit customers only. Savings are based on the standard cover price of £4.99. Your subscription will start with the next available issue, and you will receive 13 issues in a year. Prices are correct at the time of print and subject to change. For full terms and conditions visit shop.kelsey.co.uk/terms. Data protection: We take great care in handling your personal detail sand these will only ever be used as set out in our privacy policy which can be viewed at shop.kelsey.co.uk/privacy-policy. You may unsubscribe at any time.



Liz and Rio, a freshly shorn Alpaca

Dear Reader,

Now that you've taken a good look at the all-new *Country Smallholder*, can we tempt you to become a subscriber?

You'll get the latest news, the best ideas and unrivalled veterinary advice, all delivered direct to your door every month.

On top of that, there'll be features and articles in each issue on everything from hobby farming to keeping poultry and organic gardening. What's not to like!

Liz Wright, Editor

Liz

Subscribe to the Country Smallholder today

READER Q&A
ASK US ANYTHING
BEE HIVE SECRETS REVEALED!
The COUNTRY SMALLHOLDER
thecountrysmallholder.com
Spring 2023 £4.75
GUILT-FREE
Get the best out of your smallholding without worry
SPRING STARTS HERE
Stronger seedlings, orphan lambs, or shearing alpacas – it's time to get going
PLUS
SPRING SHOW SPECIAL
57 country events to choose from
Harvesting your rainwater
All the latest machinery news
Let's all move to a smallholding in Nottinghamshire!
FREE VET ADVICE IN EVERY ISSUE
PRACTICAL POULTRY
Poultry biosecurity – feed, water, bedding, and record keeping
Choosing and using your incubator for the very best hatch
Solving one of the great mysteries of goose breeding p.55
YOUR CHICKENS HEALTHY
MAKE YOUR OWN SOAP PAGE 14
RARE BREEDS ON COMMON LAND

Enjoy all the benefits of being a subscriber

- Get 6 issues for just £24
- Never miss an issue
- Save 26% on the shop price
- Free UK delivery direct to your door

SUBSCRIBING IS EASY

VISIT SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/CSH2023

Or complete the freepost postal coupon to the left

Or call **01959 543 747** and quote **CSH2023**

Boost summer time success on your veg patch

Summertime – weatherproof your veg

Kim Stoddart explains how to keep your veg patch healthy and productive the natural, low-cost way....

With a slower, colder start to 2023, the smallholding vegetable garden is now thankfully catching up and produce is starting to grow and ripen thick and fast. It's such an exciting time of year and there really is nothing like loving home-nurtured organic fruit and vegetables to bring to the table. Packed full of goodness and so superior in flavour, freshness (and possibly also nutrients) than longer-stored supermarket fare. For money saving, to reduce plastic and associated air miles, and .. just ....because it feels so incredibly good.

Summertime should also be a time of year to relax and enjoy the fruits of your labour. And with all the continued horrible things happening in the world, it's arguably incredibly important to be able to do so. To be able to just be in your edible haven without the pressure of multifarious to do lists, exacting demands or purchasing pressures. Here's how to cut yourself some slack and boost enjoyment and productivity the climate change savvy way:

KNOW THAT TIME TO ENJOY YOUR VEGETABLE PATCH IS IMPORTANT

So often us gardeners feel guilt. Feel like we aren't doing enough, that we should be always active and working in our outside spaces. It helps therefore to know that actually, taking time to just sit and stare peacefully is incredibly important when it comes to successful gardening around our increasingly volatile climate. Being in a state of fight or flight rushing around extremely busy doesn't enable you to tap into the executive decision making function in your brain which enables you to problem solve. Yet making decisions intuitively around problems and weather patterns is essential moving forwards as it is no longer gardening as usual.

So... finding some emotional regulation and calm actually makes you a more resilient gardener and is therefore absolutely key. We also deserve it - wellbeing and time out is important.

REDUCE YOUR WATERING DEMANDS

While the idea of a patch of dry, sunny weather is massively appealing, it also potentially increases the amount of watering we have to do. The to and fro requirements of keeping plants sufficiently quenched can be time consuming at best and a real bind during periods of drought. Here's how to create a more resilient and self sufficient

Building a mini pond in your polytunnel will help attract beneficial slug eating wildlife like this frog

vegetable garden with less watering needs overall:

- **Less can be more**
  The more you water your plants, the needier they can become of your assistance. They can develop much shallower root systems because they know that they don't need to work hard to seek out food or water and this can make them lazy.
- **Make the watering you do go further**
  If you water at the cooler times of the day (early morning or evening) this will help avoid water wastage through evaporation.

Water the soil itself, not the plant foliage and water for longer. This enables the liquid refreshment to permeate more deeply into the ground and stay around for longer, all the while helping to nurture a plant that can better fend for itself longer term. This means less watering for you.

Use mulches around your especially water hungry plants to help keep that precious moisture trapped in for longer. This can be a thin sprinkling of compost, leaf mould, wood chip, comfrey or grass clippings, it helps protect soil from the drying glare of the sun.

No dig - try and not disturb the soil as natural systems can help the ground to hold and maintain water for longer. There are so many reasons why - one example is Mycorrhizal fungi which can bind to plant roots to help them find food and water. This is a resilient ally you seriously want in your soil.

Ground cover is also very important as it helps protect plants from the sun and avoids soil from drying out so quickly. I use lots of filler plants around produce in a mixed planting system which include pick and come again lettuce leaves, rocket, calendula and nasturtium. Just pop them in gaps and you will also widen your produce picking opportunities as a result.

Nasturtiums make really good ground cover plants

NATURAL PEST CONTROL

There are so many products on the market that gardeners are told they need and natural pest control itself is no exception. While most of us now know the damage that many of the pesticides can cause, many of the self-proclaimed natural solutions can also punch a hole in your monthly coffers and many are simply surplus to requirements anyway. Although it can take time to build natural eco systems where predators can help address the balance on your plot, here are some quick (and longer term ways) to boost results without spending a penny.

SLUGS

If you have an issue with these slippery customers - try and work out where they are coming from. Is it the raised bed itself (as they can deteriorate over time and provide slug hiding opportunities)? While ground cover has its uses, check is there some foliage nearby they are seeking shelter in? In which case try and cut it back. Likewise removing the lower leaves of plants can help reveal hiding places which enable speedy removal. Try to leave a plank of wood on the ground in new beds as slugs will tend to shelter underneath.

Longer term, boosting biodiversity and predator numbers will help massively. This way slugs will serve a purpose as food for something else. Amphibians, spiders, hedgehogs, ground beetles, ladybirds, lacewings, parasitic wasps, earwigs, slow worms ….. all have a beneficial role to play.

APHIDS

These problematic creatures seem to home in on plants that have been weakened in some way. You can cut off affected foliage or squish the pests as a quick solution, but also natural allies can be found in ladybird or lacewing larvae that can hoover up thousands of these aphids in their lifetime. Stinging nettles and fennel will help provide an attractive habitat longer term. Know also that spiders, earwigs and wasps can further help keep numbers at bay.

Try giving your plant some compost to help boost its strength to recover also.

CARROT FLY

To prevent issues it is best to mix plants - growing a few carrots here and there around other produce and among strong smeller plants like herbs Also to squeeze some scented herby foliage after picking carrots to help disguise the smell and prevent issues.

FINALLY, KEEP PICKING

I've interviewed many smallholders over the years and found many experienced stress from having grown too much produce that they simply didn't know what to do with. Frozen carrots anyone?

Also, many plants can grow over if left to their own devices, with the likes of coriander, rocket, lettuce and suchlike bolting and flowering. Seed saving is great but wasted produce is not and aside from plants you have designated to save from, repeated picking is your greatest ally. It will enable plants to carry on growing and will afford you with a more attractive selection of produce with which to work. Baby courgette and runner beans are more likely to be desirable to yourself and others, with more culinary options all-round than marrows.

ALL ABOUT KIM STODDART

Kim Stoddart runs a range of popular polytunnel and undercover growing and climate-change-savvy gardening day and online courses from her smallholding. Her new **The Climate Change Garden book** is out now. *www.greenrocketcourses.com.* 07796 677178.

Water wise with deep watering and using ground cover and mulches around water hungry plants to keep moisture in

I've caught a swarm. Now what?

Claire Waring guides you through the process of hiving a swarm

With a sigh of relief, you have collected your swarm and have it contained in a skep or box, with a loose-weave cloth tied tightly over the open side. You have retrieved it from the caller's garden and driven home carefully.

But now what?

A NEW 'DES RES'

You have to give the bees a new home which, let's face it, is going to be one of your spare hives. At this stage, you need a floor, an eke or empty super, a brood box with frames of comb or foundation, a framed rigid queen excluder, an inner cover and a roof. Swarms are expecting to draw out comb in their new nest so it's a good time to get some foundation drawn out. Depending on the size of the swarm, the time of year, the weather and availability of nearby forage, you may well have to provide a super before too long.

If you were called out to collect the swarm, you probably haven't had a chance to get things ready back in the apiary. What you need to do first is decide where you want to put your new colony.

Take the swarm to the apiary. If you can't hive the bees straight away, you need to let them fly. Put a spare floor on the site and then turn the skep over and place it there. Undo the twine or string to release the cloth and then prop up the edge of the skep to form an entrance in the same direction as you want the bees to fly from the hive. The bees will start flying around, orientating on their new position. However, if you are able to hive the bees straight away, just keep the skep in the shade while you sort things out.

GET PREPARED

Gather the hive parts together. If the skep is already on the new site, pick it up on its floor and move it to one side.

Place the floor on the chosen site and put the rigid queen excluder on top. Why? To stop the swarm absconding before they get settled. The bees will not swarm if the queen cannot go with them. Use a rigid excluder rather than a plastic or zinc one as it will not sag, possibly opening up the holes sufficiently for the queen to squeeze through, especially if she is a slim-line virgin.

Bees in a swarm will expose their Nasonov glands and use their wings to fan the 'we are here' pheromone into the air to attract their nest mates.

Then add the eke to provide a space for the shaken bees.

Get the brood box ready with a full complement of frames and have the inner cover and roof nearby.

HIVING THE SWARM

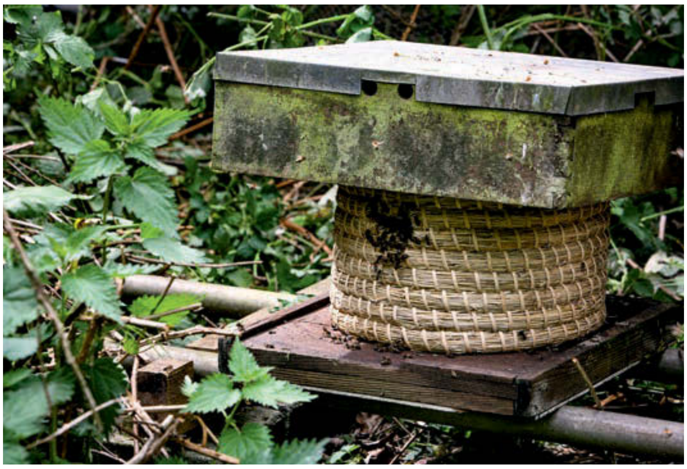
Take the skep and knock it on the ground to shake the bees off the cloth. Remove the cloth, pick up the skep, invert it and shake the bees into the eke. Knock or brush out any remaining bees clinging to the skep.

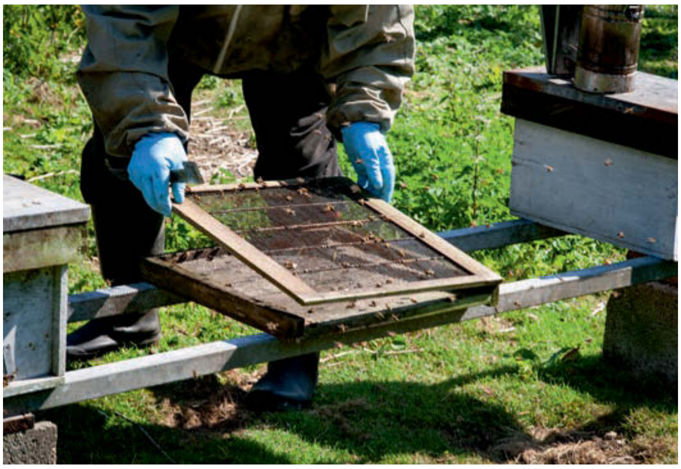
Then place the brood box on top of the eke and add the inner cover and roof.

Spread out the cloth in front of the hive so that any bees on it will be encouraged into the hive by their nest mates fanning Nasonov pheromone from the entrance.

JOB DONE!

Well, nearly. What you must remember to do is to return to the apiary some 24


If you cannot hive your swarm straight away, put it in its new location and let the bees fly. Shade it from the sun (or rain!).


Put the floor on the new site and add a rigid queen excluder to prevent the queen from leaving – with the swarm.

Google 4.7 ★★★★★ EXCELLENT

Delivered to your door

Trustpilot 4.7 ★★★★★ EXCELLENT

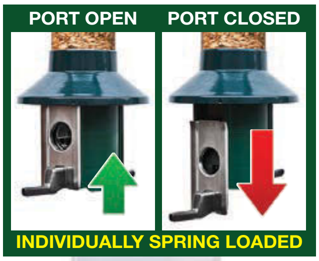
Roamwild PestOff™ Bird Feeder

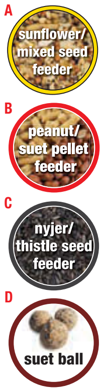
Orders despatched 24-48 hrs
The Metal seed tube lid also acts as a large baffle to prevent aerial attacks from squirrels.
Large capacity seed tube
Roamwild PestOff WARRANTY INCLUDED
Bird seed not included.
Anti rust stainless steel plates prevent squirrels from gnawing into the feeder.
Keeps Seed Dry

✗ ✓ Not just 100% squirrel proof

ALSO PEST PROOF

- **INDIVIDUALLY** spring loaded feeding ports only let the songbirds feed, not pests as these are too heavy and will close the feeding port.
- **AUTOMATICALLY** pest proof straight out of the box - No setting or spring calibration to adjust - So simple to use.
- **WEATHER PROOF** - No more seed clogging. Woodpecker Friendly and also baby squirrel proof!
- **VERY LARGE CAPACITY** and so easy to fill, simply open the lid.
- **FOUR** Versions of PestOff bird feeder available to suit different seed types.
- **EASY TO CLEAN** - simply 'clicks' apart, no bolts to remove and replace.


PORT OPEN
PORT CLOSED
INDIVIDUALLY SPRING LOADED


A
sunflower/ mixed seed feeder
B
peanut/ suet pellet feeder
C
nyjer/ thistle seed feeder
D
suet ball

roamwild
NEW!
SEED TORPEDOES

Contain Top Premium Sunflower Hearts.
Fill up on site in seconds!
Take the chore out of refilling feeders.
Available in 1 Litre packs of 3 or 6.

Secondary baffle feature protects birds and seed from the elements and also prevents squirrels sliding down the feed tube to access the food ports.

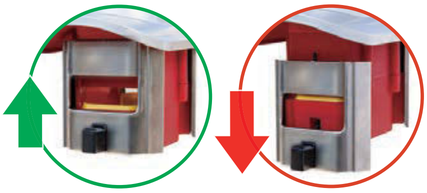
Bird seed not included.

Designed in the UK GUARANTEED **PATENTED**

Roamwild PestOff® Chicken Feeder Kit

Not just 100% Rat Proof!

INDIVIDUALLY Spring loaded feeding ports only lets CHICKENS feed, not pests!


PORT OPEN
PORT CLOSED

UNIQUE ANTI SPILL DESIGN

NEW
Roamwild PestOff WARRANTY INCLUDED

AUTOMATICALLY PEST PROOF
NEVER NEEDS ADJUSTING
NO MORE NEED FOR RAT POISON

Includes hanging bracket and chain

LARGE CAPACITY
4LTS / 8LBS
Suitable for feeding all breeds of chicken

Designed in UK • PATENTED

Roamwild Multi-Cleaner Broom

Cleans up wet and dry mess with ease

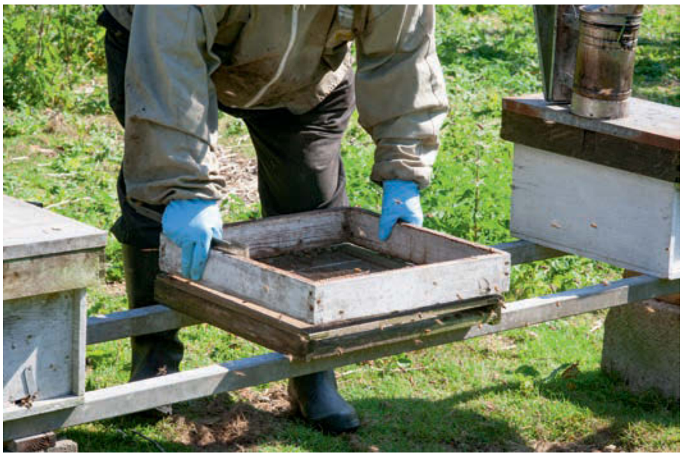
GREAT FOR SWEEPING CHICKEN COOPS
PERFECT FOR PICKING UP DOG HAIR

- Broom handle removes pet hairs and twists to give maximum manoeuvrability.
- Includes microfibre and mop covers to mop and polish the floor.
- Reaches into corners, crevices and slides under low objects.

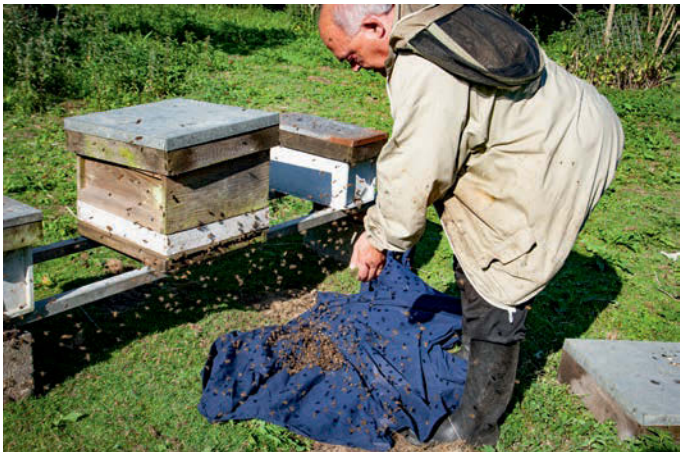
roamwild®

The Broom That Leaves Nothing Behind

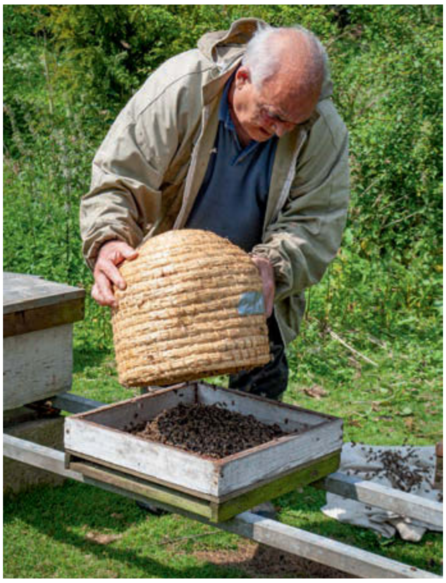
roamwild®
UNIQUE PRODUCTS ALL IN ONE PLACE
Hurry! Order online now for superfast delivery
www.roamwildproducts.co.uk
Oakthrift, Sevenacres, Sevenacres Lane, Maldon CM9 8HD
CREDIT CARD ORDERLINE: 0208 327 0455
During office hours only Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm excluding bank holidays
ROAMWILD GUARANTEE: If not completely satisfied with your purchase return within 7 days for a full refund of purchase price.



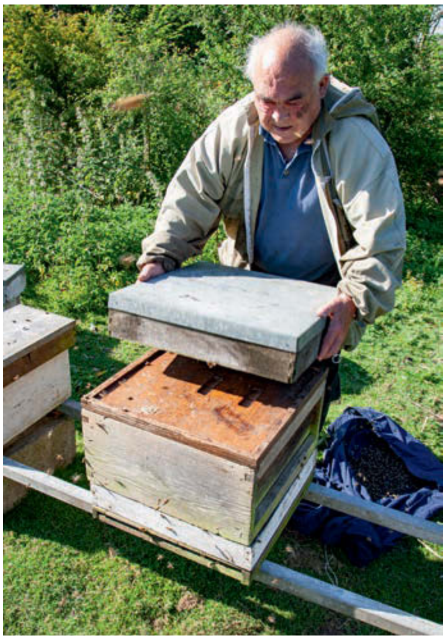
Place an eke or empty super on top to make a space into which to shake the bees.



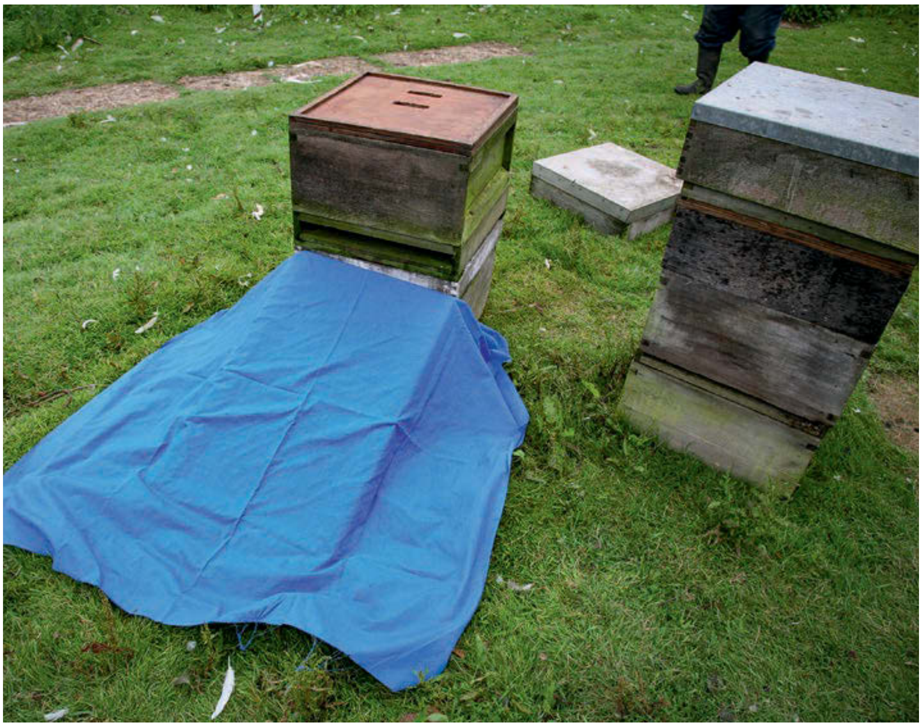
Spread the cloth in front of the hive so that any remaining bees will be attracted to join the others.



Knock the bees into the bottom of the skep, remove the cloth and then shake the swarm into the eke.



Place the brood box on top of the eke and add the inner cover and roof. Job done – well almost. Remember to remove the eke and excluder 24 hours later.



Prop the board up to the entrance and cover it with a cloth that hangs over each edge to prevent the queen from going underneath.

hours later to remove the queen excluder and eke. You should find that all the bees have moved up onto the combs but knock any on the excluder and eke in the top or in front of the hive and they will find their way in. You don't know whether this is a prime swarm with a mated queen or a cast or after-swarm containing a virgin queen. If it is the latter, you don't want to imprison her in the hive when she needs to go out to mate!

This is the quick and easy way of hiving a swarm. However, if you have the time, you might want to use the more 'traditional' way of running the bees in through the entrance.

THE 'TRADIONAL' WAY

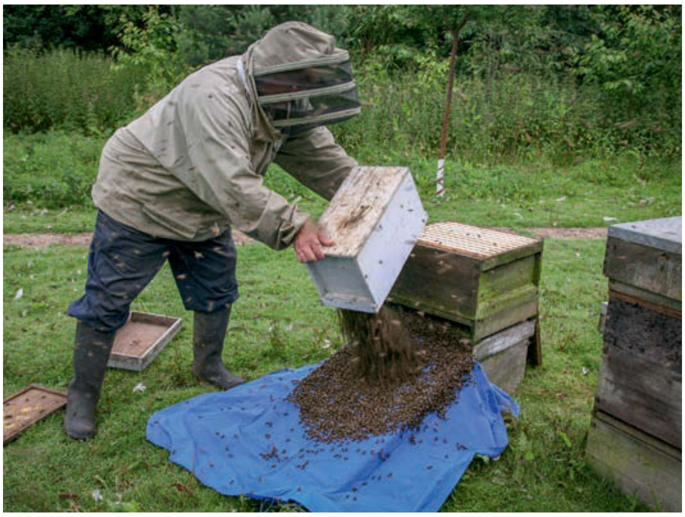
As well as the equipment described previously, you will need to put the hive on a stand. You also need a board roughly the width of the hive that you can prop up at the entrance, forming a slope. I would suggest a reasonably shallow one.

Cover the board with a cloth that hangs down on either side to prevent the queen from sneaking over the edge and hiding underneath. Knock the bees down into the skep (or here a nucleus box) as before. Shake the bees out onto the board.

Then stand back and watch them start running up and into the hive. You might even spot the queen! The workers will start fanning and the Nasonov pheromone will encourage bees to move up the slope and will also attract any that are flying around.

You can encourage stragglers with judicious use of the smoker.

Once all the bees have walked into the hive, you can remove the cloth and board and leave them to settle in. Again, if you have put an excluder over the floor, don't forget to remove it 24 hours later.



Shake the bees out onto the cloth near the entrance ...

... and watch them run into the hive. You might even see the queen!

Gentle use of the smoker will encourage stragglers to move into the hive.

A few days later, when the swarm has become established, inspect the colony to determine whether you have a mated queen or not. The bees should have started to build out the foundation and you can check for eggs. A mated queen in a prime swarm will start to lay as soon as there are cells available. The workers will be out foraging and beginning to collect pollen and nectar. Nine or ten days later, you should see sealed brood and you can see if it is healthy. If you don't see eggs and suspect there is a virgin queen present, leave the colony alone for at least a week. You don't want to be inspecting it when she returns from her mating flight and is diverted to another colony.

A QUARANTINE APIARY IS A GOOD IDEA

If you have access to another apiary that is more than 2–3 miles from your permanent one, it is a good idea to hive swarms there in quarantine until you can inspect the brood for possible disease. European foul brood and chalkbrood will be obvious in the larvae while American foul brood is seen in sealed brood. For more information on the major brood diseases and lots of other useful information, see the Bee Craft apiary guides (www.mymagazinesub.co.uk/bee-craft/apiary-guides). You may also be able to assess the colony temperament. If the bees are bad tempered, you may want to depose the queen and replace her with a good tempered one before you move the colony to its permanent home.

Jobs for the month

July is still the main honey month for many beekeepers with lime trees and clover in flower.

Estimate how much honey you have in your supers.

When the bees don't appear to be storing honey freely in the supers, remove most of your honey crop when the cells are sealed.

Colonies will be starting to consolidate honey stores around the brood nest and are not so bothered about overcrowding.

Don't give more supers unless you are sure the bees need them. At this time of year the brood nest is beginning to contract.

Be aware that crops such as borage could still be yielding and willowherb can continue producing nectar until early August.

If you are near heather moors, this will start yielding next month.

SWARMING AGAIN?

Generally speaking, a swarm is unlikely to swarm again in the same season. However, all bees are different and some swarms build up very quickly and decide to swarm again, so keep an eye on them or half of them might disappear! Maybe the phone will ring – "There's a lot of bees in my garden and I'm afraid to go outside!"

ALL ABOUT CLAIRE WARING

Claire has kept bees in Northamptonshire since 1980. She quickly became involved with local and national beekeeping associations, serving as the first female General Secretary of the British Beekeepers' Association in 2004–2005.

She was Editor of Bee Craft for 23 years until the magazine's centenary in 2019, seeing it achieve gold, silver and bronze medals at Apimondia international beekeeping congresses.

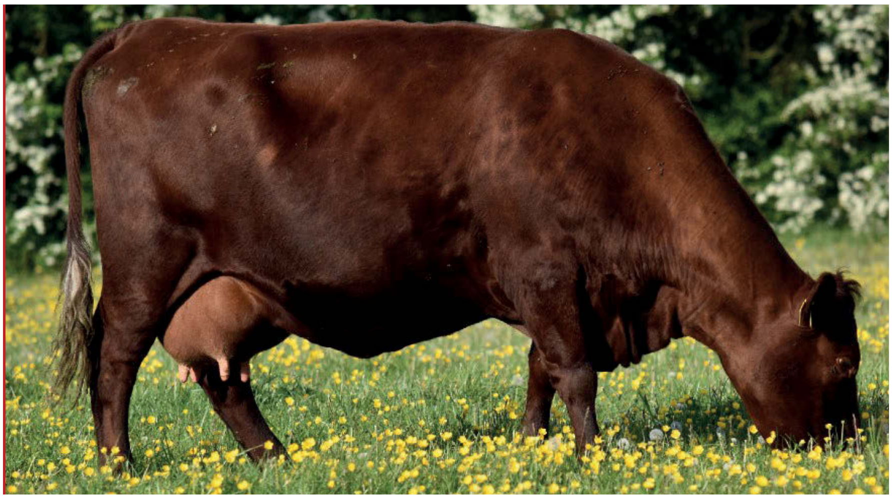
Together with her late husband, Adrian, she wrote the Haynes Bee Manual, which includes some 400 of their photographs, and Teach Yourself Beekeeping, with a second edition published as Starting Out in Beekeeping. She also made a major contribution to Collins Beekeeper's Bible. She has contributed articles to a number of smallholder magazines.

Claire is a very keen photographer, specialising in wildlife and macro photography, particularly bees and other small creatures. She won the gold medal for beekeeping photography at Apimondia in 2005 and the silver medal in 2009.

Red Poll Cattle

The perfect suckler cow

RED POLL CATTLE SOCIETY
ESTD 1888



Our customers are raving about the Red Poll beef, it can't be beaten on taste or tenderness and they keep coming back for more. Once they have tasted it nothing else will do.

Farmer Barnes' Butchery,
Hethersett,
Norwich

Native Breed
High meat to bone ratio
Dual purpose
Naturally polled
Easy calving
Ideal house cow
Will cross suckle
Hardy
Docile
Long lived

www.redpoll.org
☎ 01245 600032
secretary@redpoll.co.uk

Animal Arks

HAVE THE PERFECT HOUSE FOR THEM PIG • SHEEP • GOATS • ALPACAS • DONKEYS • PONIES
HORSES • CALVES • CHICKENS • DUCKS • GEESE • DOGS

PIG
STARTER KIT

Everything you need to start keeping pigs
KIT COMPRISES

- PIG ARK 8ft x 6ft S/A with heavy duty non-slip Timber dedetachable FLOOR.
- Electric Fence energiser HOTLINE 2yr guarantee
- 20 Hotline wide heel bar stakes
- 200 metres 6 strand polywire
- 15 litre mains drinker with drain plug
- 3ft Galvanised feed trough
- 4 new galvanised hurdles
- Pig Moving Board
- 1 Earth Stake
- Book "Traditional Pig Keeping" by experts on pig Carol Harris
- The ark and equipment can be altered to cater for your individual needs, the 8ft x 6ft is suitable for 8-10 weaners to pork weight, a sow and litter or 2 or 3 dry sows

All this for £999 inc VAT.

Inc Door with towing eyes

SHEEP-PIG OR GOAT SHELTERS

Open fronted-easy self assembly
8ft x 6ft - **£533** inc vat
8ft x 8ft - **£659** inc vat

TRADITIONAL PIG ARKS • SELF ASSEMBLY

From this...
... to this

Traditional Arks	No Floor	With Detachable Floor
8ft x 4ft	**£481**	**£571**
8ft x 6ft	**£573**	**£720**
8ft x 8ft	**£699**	**£847**

PRICE INCLUDES DELIVERY TO MAINLAND UK

Do you like breaking your back cleaning out a fixed floor ark? Our arks detach from the floors are easy cleaning and moving. Our floors are made of heavy duty non-slip tanalised board on 4"x2" treated runners with our unique low chain system fitted. **We never compromise on quality** right down to massive heavy duty fixings we want your arks to last. **WE NOW SUPPLY THE NATIONAL TRUST**

HIGH TOP ARKS 8ft x 8ft x 6ft High

OPTIONAL FLOOR AVAILABLE

These new arks enable you to walk in with ease for Pigs/Goats/Storage/Lawnmower Sheds.

These new arks/Huts are 6ft High in the centre they are Ideal for livestock or general storage, ride on mower etc.

We can modify the front door opening to whatever width you require. Doors are available as an optional extra.

£999.00 inc vat

FARROWING ARKS

We make fantastic farrowing arks. They are based on an 8ft x 8ft ark complete with a fitted rear door, farrowing rails and panels to form a rear creep area. The ark is complete with a detachable heavy duty timber floor with tow chains. **£936 inc vat** PRICE INCLUDES DELIVERY TO MAINLAND UK

OUR TRUE KUNE KUNE, POT BELLY OR MINIATURE PIG ARK

It has a reduced size offset front door, a large fitted rear access door and comes complete with one of our heavy duty detachable floors. **DELIVERED & FULLY ASSEMBLED £510 INC. VAT**

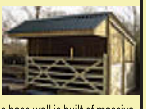
GOAT HOUSES

For larger goats 8ft x 6ft x 4ft height. Lockable Stable door. Easy self assembly £608.40 inc vat. Floors available

MINI GOAT HOUSES

Mini goat house for pygmy or miniature goats. 6 ft x 4 ft x 3ft 2" high. Lockable front stable door. Fully assembles **£499.20** inc vat. Floors available.

PREMIER FIELD SHELTERS



probably one of the strongest mobile field Shelters on the market-inbuilt Kickboards. As the base wall is built of massive 46mm Solid timber. Green steel roofs 12ft x 12ft with or without canprise from **£1920 INC VAT** (in kit from)

RECYCLED PLASTIC PIG HUTS/ARKS

8ft BY 8ft
THESE COMMERCIAL GRADE PIG ARKS ARE MADE FROM RIGID 18MM RECYCLED PLASTIC CLADDING BOARDS SET ON A STRONG 4"X2" FRAMEWORK. THE BASE TIMBERS ARE CLAD BELOW WITH THE ECO SHEET-NO TIMBER IS IN CONTACT WITH THE GROUND.

- MADE FROM 9MM THICK RECYCLED PLASTIC
- WARM CONSTRUCTION-COOL IN SUMMER, WARM IN WINTER
- NO CONDENSATION
- PIGPROOF STEEL DOOR AND EDGE PROTECTION
- ROTPROOF
- REAR VENTILATION
- EASY TWO MAN SELF ASSEMBLY. WE DO MOST OF THE CONSTRUCTION HERE.

£759 INC VAT AND DELIVERY
OPTIONAL EXTRAS WE CAN ADD FARROWING BARS-REAR DOORS.
FLOOR PACK IS £169.40 EXTRA AND THIS IS MADE OF 4"X2" SKIDS WITH ¾" TIMBER NON SUP BOARDS. THE BOTTOMS OF THE SKIDS ARE PROTECTED BY ECO BOARD AND THERE IS A TOW CHAIN SYSTEM THE ARK DETACHES FROM THE FLOOR FOR EASY MOVING AND CLEANING.
*UP TO 5 OR 6 ON THE SAME DOUBLE PALLET TO REDUCE TRANSPORT COSTS POSTAL CODE NEEDED FOR DELIVERY QUOTATION

ONLINE SHOP NOW OPEN

Main office telephone: 01579 382743

COMMERCIAL ENQUIRIES WELCOME - WE SELL ASSEMBLED ARKS UP TO 12 FOOT LONG - WE SELL A HIGHER SPECIFICATION PRODUCT THAN MANY OF OUR COMPETITORS - HEAVIER TIMBERS - HEAVIER FIXINGS BUT OUR BUYING POWER ENABLES US TO KEEP OUR PRICES LOW

MAIN AGENTS FOR GREEN FROGS STUNNING RANGE OF ECO POULTRY HOUSING - MAIN AGENTS FOR HOTLINE ELECTRIC FENCING

Please contact us for free price list WEBSITE: WWW.ANIMALARKS.CO.UK

Three top ways to help your local wildlife in a heatwave

Charlotte Ambrose, RSPB Spokesperson, gives three ways you can improve life for nature close to home

In times of drought or extreme heat our outdoor spaces can act as oases for struggling wildlife, and this is only going to become more and more important as the climate crisis continues to make our weather more unpredictable and extreme.

Here are top three things you can do to help in extreme heat or drought - for more detailed information please visit the RSPB's website:

1: PROVIDE FRESH WATER

Even small water sources such as a saucer or shallow bowl can be a vital lifeline for butterflies, birds, hedgehogs, and amphibians in times of heat stress. Adding a few stones to the edge of your water source can help them gain safe access.

If you have more space you could even put in a mini pond or a larger pond. Old ceramic sinks or buckets sunk in the ground can work – just make sure to put some stones or a plank in to allow wildlife a way to climb out, and you can add a few aquatic native plants to keep the water oxygenated.

Alternatively, you could try making a bog area if you want to extend your pond, or if you're not sure about having a body of deeper water. Dig out an area of shallow ground, big enough so that it won't dry out. Add some lining and then puncture it to allow for some drainage, and plant in bog-loving plants such as purple loosestrife, marsh marigold and water mint.

Another great thing you can do to help is to install a water butt. Tap water often comes from wildlife habitats such as rivers and reservoirs, and it takes energy to make it fit for drinking. Wildlife and plants prefer rainwater anyway!

2: CREATE SHADY SPOTS

Overgrown areas in your garden can provide an invaluable cool retreat for wildlife. You can let your grass grow long to provide shelter for invertebrates, or if you have enough space you could plant a hedge, or put in a pond or bog area. Hedges, trees and dense shrubs provide shelter for birds in the heat, as well as flowers for pollinators and fruit as food for all sorts of wildlife in the autumn and winter. Hawthorn, beech, crab apple – there are lots of options.

As well as planting more vegetation you can also allow leaf piles to build up or construct a bug hotel to allow amphibians and invertebrates to make use of these cooler damp areas in the future.

3: FEED THE WILDLIFE – BUT KEEP UP THE HYGIENE

In the heat of summer, it is harder for wildlife such as blackbirds, robins, hedgehogs, and frogs to find worms and other minibeasts living in the hard ground. Putting out food little and often can help to ensure a supply without it rotting in the warm weather. You can buy hedgehog food, and creating shady and sheltered spots as mentioned above will help boost numbers of potential invertebrates available to amphibians.

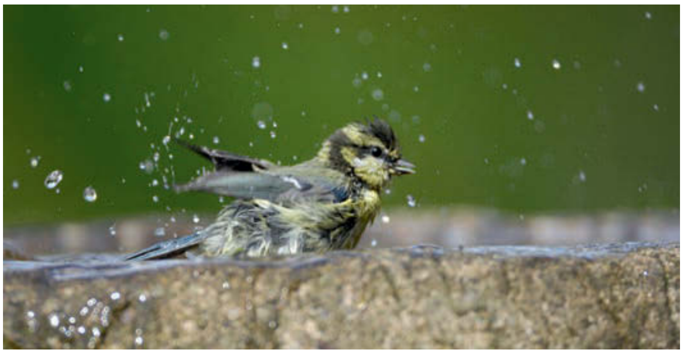
Young birds also get a lot of moisture through their food so you can try providing moisture-rich foods. Fruit such as apples and pears are a great option, as well as pre-soaked sultanas and currants, or even meaty tinned dog and cat food (though this isn't a great option if there's a local cat who might eat it and be sure not to put out dry biscuits as birds may choke on the lumps).

It is important to clean your feeders thoroughly with diluted weak disinfectant solution ideally once a week and don't allow old food and droppings to accumulate. It can help to just put out enough food for a couple of days and to clean your feeders and bird bath at least once a week with a diluted cleaning agent.

PICTURE CREDIT: NICK UPTON (RSPB-IMAGES.COM)

Planting a clump of Ragged robin Silene flos-cuculi and Lesser spearwort Ranunculus flammula, insect friendly native plants, in a newly built small garden pond, Wiltshire, UK, May

Common frog Rana temporaria, adult floating on the surface of water, Hertfordshire, *Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)*



Pied wagtail Motacilla alba, adult drinking from water trough, West Glamorgan, Wales, *Credit Line Alison Garwood (rspb-images.com)*

Where you can get inspiration on ways to help wildlife

Seating and fower border in wildlife garden, RSPB Flatford, Suffolk... Andy Hay

Newport Wetlands, Newport, Wales. Aerial view *David Wootton [RSPB Images]*

RSPB FLATFORD WILDLIFE GARDEN, ESSEX

One half mini meadows, and one half garden zones, this reserve is bursting with inspiration for your own outdoor space – whether it be trees and shrubs, mini wildlife ponds or piles of logs.

RSPB ARNE, DORSET

The host of this year's BBC Springwatch has got a lot to love. All six species of the UK's native sun-loving reptiles can be found here, along with Mangalitza pigs and donkeys introduced to create a mosaic of landscapes for wildlife such as the Dartford Warbler and Nightjar.

RSPB NEWPORT WETLANDS

Wetlands are hugely important habitats at any time of year, and in times of heat and drought they can provide a critical respite. Newport Wetlands, located just an hour outside of Cardiff, is home to amazing birds such as the Bittern, and 16 different species of dragonfly.

Wooly pig, a Hungarian breed of domestic pig, being used to help create new heathland where there once was pine forest through grazing, RSPB Arne Nature Reserve, Dorset, October *Terry Bagley [RSPB Images]*

Illegal killing major cause of death in Hen Harriers

Illegal killing is the main cause of death in Hen Harriers aged between one and two years of age, and a major cause of deaths in birds under one year, according to a new paper, published in the journal Biological Conservation, and led by the RSPB.

Using data from the largest tracking programme for Hen Harriers globally, the authors discovered that individuals tracked by the project were typically living just 121 days after fledging. Hen Harriers are on the Red List of birds of conservation concern in the UK, meaning they are one of the country's most at-risk species. Despite all birds of prey being protected by law since the 1950s and more recently under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, illegal persecution is known to be a serious issues - in 2019, a UK Government study found illegal killing to be the main factor limiting the recovery of the UK Hen Harrier population.

To investigate the survival and movements of Hen Harriers, researchers used satellite tracking devices. Whilst these tags provide critical insights into the ecology of the species and aid in conservation, they can also be used to recover dead individuals, thus allowing the cause of death to be identified.

Between 2014 to 2020, RSPB and partners fitted satellite transmitters to juvenile Hen Harriers at nests across Scotland, England, Wales, and the Isle of Man, deploying tags on 148 individuals funded through the Hen Harrier LIFE project. The team looked at survival rates, causes of death whether natural or through illegal killing, and associations between mortality and land managed for grouse shooting.

Annual survival was low, especially among birds under one year old (males: 14%; females: 30%), with illegal killing accounting for 27-41% of birds under one year, and 75% of mortality in birds aged between one and two years. Not enough birds survived over 2 years to estimate mortality due to illegal killing for adults.

Hen harrier Circus cyaneus, female manoeuvering in flight, *Mark Thomas [RSPB Images}*

The RSPB's specialist Investigations team gathers evidence of raptor crime, and works alongside other groups, organisations and the police in order to investigate wildlife crimes.

PRACTICAL
PIGS
KEEPING AND REARING

SUBSCRIBE NOW
– TRY 4 ISSUES FOR JUST £12!

For the past 12 years, *Practical Pigs* has been providing down-to-earth content to small-scale pig-keepers and breeders.

DOWN-TO-EARTH PIG-KEEPING ADVICE
PRACTICAL PIGS KEEPING AND REARING
BRITISH PIG ASSOCIATION BPA
£4.50 ISSUE 50 SPRING 2023
LANDRACE BUYING GUIDE
DISCOVER THE BENEFITS OF THIS INFLUENTIAL BREED
ME AND MY PIGS
Ali Chew's success with tasty Tamworth pork
CASE STUDIES
Pedigree Breeder of the Year Pork Producer profiles
KEEPING BOARS
All you need to know before adding a boar to your herd
PIG HEALTH
Seneca Valley Virus poses a real risk
BPA • BREED SURVEY RESULTS AND THE LATEST CONSERVATION PLANS • JUNIOR PIG CLUB
PLUS: APHA HEALTH REPORT • BREEDERS' DIRECTORY
EEPING ADVICE
£4.50 ISSUE 49 WINTER 2022
LLY
ME AND MY PIGS
Georgina Woolf and her Gloucestershire Old Spots
PIG HEALTH
Swine Dysentery
The importance of essential amino-acids
SAFE AS HOUSES
Security tips for your equipment and livestock
BPA • NEWS • CONSERVATION • SHOW REPORTS
JUNIOR PIG CLUB • AWARD WINNERS AND MORE
PLUS: BREEDERS' DIRECTORY • AHDB UPDATE

~~£4.50~~
£3 PER ISSUE!

Want to keep some pigs on your smallholding, but need some expert advice? *Practical Pigs* magazine provides smallholders with highly relevant content to help them get the best results from their pigs. Each issue features in-depth buying guides and practical articles on housing, feeding, owners' stories and health and welfare-related Q & As.

TO TRY 4 ISSUES FOR £12, HEAD TO
SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/PIGS4FOR12

ALTERNATIVELY, CALL OUR CUSTOMER SERVICES TEAM ON 01959 543 747
BETWEEN 8:30AM-5:30PM AND QUOTE THE REFERENCE 'PPG'*

*Direct debit offer. Here at Kelsey Publishing we take your privacy seriously and will only use your personal information to administer your account and to provide the products and services you have requested from us. We will only contact you about our special offers via the preferences you have indicated above and you can update these at any time by emailing us at subs@kelsey.co.uk or by calling us on 01959 543 747.

Q&A

Email your questions to
thecountrysmallholder.ed@kelsey.co.uk

Our Experts answer your questions

Will the old owners take the CPH with them?

Q I have just moved to ten acres in Somerset and the old owners have moved to a smaller holding nearer to the Home Counties. Someone told me they would take their CPH (County Parish Holding) number with them but someone else said that I didn't need to do anything because the holding number will remain the same. I'm not sure what to do as I want to have cattle now I have more land and I know I need a CPH holding number for them.

A Good They are both wrong! Because the CPH is linked to the location as well as the person, then no one can take it with them. But also because it is linked to the land and the person, you will need to register as you are now the owner (Defra rural services helpline: 03000 200 301)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-a-county-parish-holding-cph-number?fbclid=IwAR0jcaTjNCW_QHTR0LJbI028cdG8a18RtcYdcqUKvj6FClB2WrwKhbHO004

Follow the link and you'll find all you need and the RPA will answer any questions that you have.

For anyone else interested in this, it is the same system for whether you have a smallholding or a farm and you will need a CPH number if you are keeping cattle, goats, sheep, or pigs plus some other livestock. It is free to register.

Gloucester cattle. You will need a CPH number to keep cattle

POUTRY QUICK QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q Do I need a cockerel for my hens to lay eggs?

A No you don't, your hens will lay regardless of whether the eggs are fertile or not. If you don't want to breed and you want to dispense with noisy crowing, then don't have a cockerel. It's particularly unnecessary to have a cockerel if you are keeping hybrid hens for laying.

Q How long will my chicks need artificial heat?

A Until they are feathered enough to withstand the climate. Gradually raise the heat lamp, checking all the time that they are not huddling under it (too cold). Turn it off on warm days and then on warm days and nights until finally you transfer the chicks to a sheltered and safe house and run, draught free but well ventilated. Continue to check they are not huddling.

Remember ducklings too will need heat when they are in down (yellow and fluffy)

New to poultry? Ask us a quick question

Advantages of raised beds

Dill
Portulak

Make sure your raised beds are deep enough

Q I am considering raised beds this year and wonder if you have any advice.

A Raised beds are a very controllable way of growing veg and are ideal not only for keen, active gardeners but also for people who find it harder to bend. Their advantages include

- You can position them on a paved or concreted area
- You don't have to dig
- You can have them at the height convenient to you – Top Tip – don't have them too shallow as they will dry out and also you don't want to have to bend down too much
- Easy to weed and you can do it by hand
- Soil will warm up more quickly – also a disadvantage when watering in the summer
- Easier to use protection either from birds or from frost
- Although you can grow all veg, I find it best to use them for salad veg, spinach, herbs etc – the high value crops that are expensive to buy. But really the cropping is up to you and your imagination!

Time to talk turkey

Q My wife is keen to keep two or three turkeys to rear for their favourite time of the year. Where can I find out about suitable housing?

A Three or four turkeys can be housed in an 3 metre x 2 metre garden shed overnight. It is also large enough to keep them in throughout the day on occasions when the weather is too inclement to let them out. A 2 metre x 1.5 metre shed would accommodate up to six turkeys that are being reared for the table but they would need to be outside during the day as this space is far too small for them to be kept in during the day.

The shed would need ventilation putting in near the top of one side, opposite the prevailing winds and cover it with small mesh wire netting, doubly securing the edges with wooden battens.

Young turkeys should not have perches until around 12 weeks of age - although from 2-3 weeks they try to fly up and perch. The reason for this is that the breastbone is growing and perching can dent it, which certainly does not look good on a carcass. The perches should be about 5cms in circumference and about 60cms to just over 60cms from the floor.

Some penning during the day will be required unless you let them roam freely on your premises. Be sure though to get them into the housing long before the sun begins to drop or they will be up in the trees for the night. Turkeys are not fox proof and if left out will almost certainly be taken before you are up in the morning. You will need to protect them from foxes in the day time as well at all stages of their life.

It is tempting fate to leave them in an outdoor run, because foxes will be able to see them and then be working hard on a way to get to them. Also, if the weather turns very bad in late autumn, although they are hardy they will 'do' better inside rather than sleeping out.

If you already have an appropriate shed or outhouse that could be converted.

Before taking on turkeys for the table always have a plan for slaughter. They are very strong, heavy birds that need careful handling and are not for beginners who have never learnt how to slaughter. Their wings alone will be difficult to restrain humanely if you've never done this before. There ae also legal implications of slaughter and you 'll need to check all this out. You may have a local butcher as they do still exist in some places, that is attached to a slaughter house. Ask at your local smallholder club. You'll also need to learn how to pluck and dress the bird for the table.

This is a fantastic on-line guide to everything you need to know to plan, prepare and understand the slaughter of turkeys in a practical way. *https://www.hsa.org.uk/catching-and-handling/turkeys*

Turkeys become very large birds so be sure you can cope

NOW IS THE TIME TO ORDER POULTS FOR CHRISTMAS

If you can still find this book it will give you invaluable information on housing and further information on turkeys in the book 'Not Just for Christmas' - the complete guide to raising turkeys by Janice Houghton-Wallace. Published by The Good Life Press.

There is also a Turkey Club for those who want to show or breed pure bred poultry. You'll find them at *https://www.turkeyclub.org.uk/turkeyclub/*

Ragwort and chickens – should they mix?

Q I have recently found several ragwort plants in the small paddock where my chickens scratch around. I have no horses or other animals but have pulled up the plants just in case as I understand they can be poisonous to poultry. However, I would be most grateful if you could put my mind at rest on the following points.

1. Do chickens eat ragwort if it is available, and how much harm does it do them?

2. Is there any chance that eggs from chickens that have eaten ragwort could be unsafe to eat?

3. My black rocks appear fit and well - would they be showing any signs of poisoning?

A I don't think poultry would peck at ragwort if there was sufficient other greenery around as they have an inbuilt sense of what not to eat. However, as a poultry keeper I would lift any ragwort that is available to them - this I do on my premises. Ragwort poisoning takes a while to have any effect and the damage to the liver is accumulative . I am unsure whether any poisons would pass through to the egg or meat, but it is better to evade any possibility of a problem.

Ragwort can be poisonous to humans as there is medical evidence of people with liver problems who have picked a great deal of ragwort with bare hands. Always use gloves to pull ragwort and then burn it. Ragwort is a pernicious weed and best eradicated. If left it will seed and the problem will become worse year on year.

Ragwort, a danger to livestock

Warmer summers may lead to more risk of nasal bots

Nasal Bot parasites detected in sheep in England

How often is this seen in the UK and what should you do? The Animal and Plant Health Agency advise on these unusual parasites

Cases of sheep flocks infested with nasal bots are occasionally detected by or reported to the veterinary investigation centres of the Animal and Plant Health Agency. It is important that sheep and goatkeepers are aware of these parasites, so that they can seek appropriate advice when they suspect it in their herd or flock. Most cases seen in the UK are mild and do not require routine treatment.

Sheep nasal bots (Latin name Oestrus ovis) are fly larvae that develop in the nasal and sinus passages of sheep and goats. The larvae make use of mouth-hooks to stay attach and feed. The adult flies do not feed and live for a short time only.

LIFECYCLE

The adult flies seek out a sheep or goat's nostrils and spray a few live first-stage larvae into the nostrils while flying past or landing briefly. The larvae (or bots) crawl into the nasal cavities, where they feed and develop for a month, before moving into the sinuses.

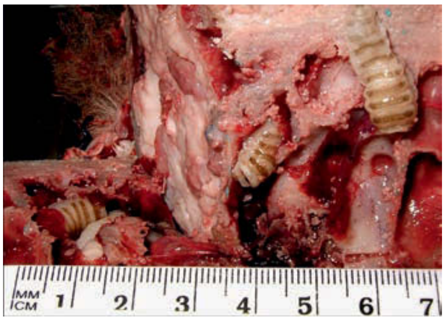
> **"The distribution in the UK suggests infestation by nasal bots is likely to be influenced by climate change**

When mature, the bots crawl back to the nasal cavities from where they are sneezed out onto the ground. When falling on the ground the bots burrow into the soil, pupate and later emerge as flies to restart the next cycle.

In Northern Europe the first adults emerge in spring and deposit their larvae on the noses of their hosts. This first generation of larvae develop rapidly and leave the host in July and August, creating an autumn generation of adult flies. The larvae from the autumn flies overwinter in the host and only become mature the following spring, then giving rise to the early summer generation of adults.

SIGNS IN INFECTED SHEEP AND GOATS

Light infestation causes mild discomfort, nasal discharge, sneezing, nose rubbing or head shaking. On rare occasions dead larvae in the sinuses can cause an allergic reaction followed by bacterial infection and even death. Very rarely, larvae may penetrate the mucosa of the nasal turbinates and enter the brain, leading to ataxia, circling and head pressing.



Nasal Bot larvae in the sinuses of a sheep

However, in general, infestations are relatively light with an average of only two to 20 larvae per host. The larvae cause inflammation of the mucosa in the nostrils and sinuses, and a thick, mucoid nasal discharge will be seen. If severe, the discharge can become bloody, and can result in breathing impairment. Infestation may result in poor weight gain in lambs, and less wool and milk production.

Dogs and humans can be affected on rare occasions. In humans, infestation is usually in the eye. The larvae do not complete their development in these hosts.

EPIDEMIOLOGY

Hot, dry weather stimulates the adult flies and can lead to considerable disturbance, with sheep trying to protect their nostrils by keeping their noses pressed against the ground. Infestation rates are dependent on climate with up to 100% of sheep infested in North Africa, 44–88% in southern France, but as low as 0.75% in southern Britain. This distribution suggests infestation by nasal bots is likely to be influenced by climate change and in the future, warmer summers and longer warm weather periods will be expected to increase the future risk from this parasite in the UK.

CONTROL AND TREATMENT

Control of the flies is not practical, with fly repellents having limited effect and no specific traps available for these flies. The adult flies are also very mobile and will simply find the sheep or goats wherever they are, so moving animals is not a viable control.

The larvae in the sheep can be killed by administration of systemic treatments, including macrocyclic lactones, such as ivermectin, doramectin and moxidectin. Whole flock prophylactic treatments should be avoided because of the increased risk of selection for resistance in other endo and ectoparasites that will be exposed to the treatment unintentionally. The environmental impacts of these treatment should also be considered and where the numbers of larvae are small, it may even not be necessary to treat infected animal, avoiding undesired consequences.

Treatment should be based on clinical signs and an assessment of risk in individual animals. If the risk on a farm is perceived to be high, then farmers should discuss treatments with their vet or animal health adviser before administering any flock level treatments. These are given twice a year (at the beginning of summer to kill newly acquired larvae and again in midwinter to kill any overwintering larvae) but are only recommended in a small number of cases.

REFERENCES:

Nasal bots (scops.org.uk)
Scops - Know your anthelmintics guide
Sheep Nasal Bot Myiasis -
Respiratory System - MSD Veterinary Manual (msdvetmanual.com)

YOUR LETTERS

Something to say? Get in touch on thecountrysmallholder.ed@kelsey.co.uk or write to us at The Country Smallholder, Kelsey Media, The Granary, 1-2 Downs Court, Yalding Hill, Yalding, ME18 6AK

You write - sharing your experiences and opinions

How eggs helped wounded servicemen

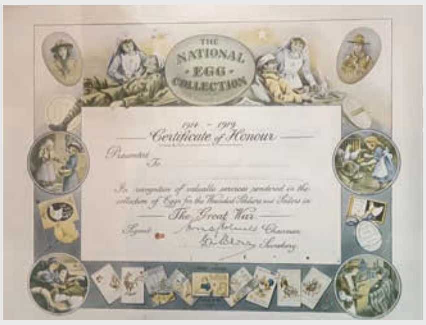
Dear Editor

We bought this certificate in an antique shop in Bideford on the North Devon coast. My husband spotted it hanging on the wall and we knew we just had to have it!

The National Egg Collection was started in late 1914. The idea was put forward by Frederick Carl who was the Editor of Poultry World.

It was hoped that the scheme would provide 20,000 newly laid eggs per week to wounded soldiers. However it was so successful that by Easter 1915 over 200,000 were being collected on a weekly basis. Queen Alexandra became patron of the scheme and again the idea was so popular that a new aim of 1,000,000 eggs a week was hoped for! This was achieved by August 1915.

The initiative appealed to all classes and ages but children in particular and that is where Joan Willis comes in! She was living with her parents in rural Somerset. We have done a little research into her but lots more to do. Her father Walter was a Thatcher by trade. She must have been encouraged to "do her bit" and she obviously did. If you search online there is quite a lot of information and you will also see a poster produced of a large white hen wearing a sash which proudly states "Enlisted for the Duration of the War".



THE NATIONAL • EGG • COLLECTION

1914 - 1919

Certificate of Honour

Presented To

The Great War

Buying local is a good place to start to be sustainable

A fascinating piece of history that I hope will appeal to the readers!

Liz Barrett

The Tree Friendly Sheep

Dear Editor

When reading though your informative magazine I noticed the article on gazing livestock in orchards and I thought I'd do a shout-out for the Shropshire sheep which now has a reputation as 'the tree-friendly sheep'. Indeed, the website for Shropshires says 'The use of Shropshires in top fruit orchards, vineyards and other types of deciduous plantation has also been developed successfully by growers in many different countries.' They even have special publication on how to manage the Shropshire which is downloadable from their website - the third edition of "Two Crops From One Acre" was produced with the help of innovative growers and contains much new advice about how to manage Shropshires in a range of different tree plantation scenarios.

We've followed the guidance and have been very pleased with the results, although having previous experience sheep and trees, we did still put on tree guards. I believe the Shropshire sheep are a favourite breed on King Charles III. For all other sheep. I chuckled at the 'Micro Mob grazing option photo where a small number are contained in a smallish area with hurdles and moved round. I think that would work well as long as the hurdles were, as shown in the photo, higher than the sheep. It's fascinating with native sheep breeds how particular characteristics were developed to suit the area. In fact, the Shropshire is a success story, having once been recognised as a rare breed but now, due to increased numbers, no longer considered as such.

Close up of the head of a Shropshire sheep with its handler holding a winners rosette

My girls are also attractive and gentle sheep, and we are glad we chose that breed.

Jill Hawkins

Check out *https://www.shropshire-sheep.co.uk/*

DESIGNED & MANUFACTURED IN THE UK - ROBUST EQUIPMENT, AFFORDABLE PRICES

SCH
(SUPPLIES) LIMITED

Rough Terrain Powered Water Bowsers

Ref: GWCRT

Fast Tow Animal Drinkers

Ref: FTADT

Water Bowsers & Drinkers

Ref: ADC

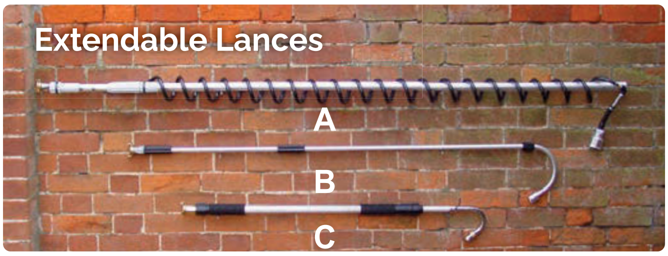
Irrigation Pumps

Ref: IGUL

Skid Mounted

Ref: W3200P

Extendable Lances



Road Legal Waterers

Ref: HBU1200ATE

Powered Waterers

Ref: ADMD

Push Water Carts

Ref: THBW

Heavy-duty farm machinery sized specifically for smallholdings.
Designed for use behind a huge variety of farm & domestic vehicles.
Contact us today for a **free** brochure featuring over 200 British machines.

MADE IN BRITAIN

01473 328272 • SALES@SCHSUPPLIES.CO.UK • WWW.SCHSUPPLIES.CO.UK

Keeping it legal – what makes a machine legal and what to watch out for when buying equipment

Our machinery columnist **Jane Brooks** has delved into several government departments to pull together an overview of the regulations around running agricultural tractors, trailers and implements.

Our columnist Jane Brooks, together with her husband Steve farms with older tractors all of which need to be registered for use on the road and have a current vehicle licence because they are used on the public highway, although you don't need to pay vehicle tax.

According to the law Agricultural vehicles, trailers and trailed appliances are covered by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSW Act), this places a duty on companies and individuals to ensure that precautions are taken to make work as safe as practically possible.

These vehicles and appliances are exempt from the legal testing requirements of many other road vehicles, so the emphasis is on the owner to ensure their equipment is safe and in good working order. Agricultural tractors do however have to registered for use on the road and have a current vehicle licence if they are used on the public highway, this needs renewing every year although you don't need to pay vehicle tax.

More farming transport accidents occur off the road than on it, so really the same high standards for road going vehicles should be applied to those used off road. The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) apply to any equipment that you use at work, which can include tractors, air compressors, chainsaws and even ladders. They requiring that equipment be suitable for the task, properly maintained and guarded, and that employees receive adequate training and information about the equipment.

These Regulations broadly apply to employers, self-employed and any person in control of work equipment and include the hirer or even someone who lends a machine out. If these vehicles, trailers and trailed appliances are driven on the public highway, they must also comply with the Construction and Use Regulations 1986 and The Road Traffic Act as in regards to road worthy condition. If any vehicle, trailer or trailed appliances is stopped, any defects found would leave the driver and owner liable for prosecution by road traffic law enforcement agencies or Police.

EXCEPTIONS TO MOT EXEMPTIONS

Even though as above, on the whole tractors don't need to undergo an MOT, there are exceptions, such as tractors that are capable by their design and construction of exceeding 40 kilometres per hour, used for the haulage of a load or burden more than 15 miles from their operating base, and where the haulage of the load or burden is not in relation to an agriculture, horticulture or forestry operation. These types of vehicles and activities may also need whoever is running them to hold an Operators Licence.

BUYING SECOND-HAND MACHINERY

When buying tractors and other second-hand machines, use these check points; are they are safe to use and comply with legal requirements such as PUWER; the operator's manual is provided, or that other relevant information can be obtained (for example, from the original manufacturer or sites on the internet); that any missing or damaged guards and other safety devices can be replaced or repaired before using the machine.

When you buy or hire machines the law requires the supplier to provide necessary safeguards. The supplier may be a manufacturer, dealer, trader, auctioneer or private seller.

PROVISION AND USE OF WORK EQUIPMENT REGULATIONS 1998 (PUWER)

PUWER place duties on people and companies who own, operate or have control over work equipment. PUWER also places responsibilities on businesses and organisations whose employees use work equipment, whether owned by them or not. PUWER requires that equipment provided for use at work is:

- suitable for the intended use
- safe for use, maintained in a safe condition and inspected to ensure it is correctly installed and does not subsequently deteriorate
- used only by people who have received adequate information, instruction and training
- accompanied by suitable health and safety measures, such as protective devices and controls. These will

More farming transport accidents occur off the road than on it so ensure the same high safety standards for road going vehicles are applied to those used off road.

normally include emergency stop devices, adequate means of isolation from sources of energy, clearly visible markings and warning devices

- used in accordance with specific requirements, e.g., for mobile work equipment and power presses

To help you comply with PUWER, make sure you buy safe work equipment and machinery.

Some work equipment, such as lifting equipment, is subject to other health and safety legislation in addition to PUWER.

WHAT LAW APPLIES TO THE SALE OF SECOND-HAND WORK EQUIPMENT?

Section 6 of the Health and Safety at Work Act requires all products supplied for use at work - whether new or second-hand - to be safe, so far as reasonably practicable. This requirement includes the provision of instructions for the safe use of the equipment.

Machinery and other work equipment may be traded in a number of ways from dealerships through to auctions, the internet and classified adverts in local papers. Any second-hand items sold for use at work will fall within scope of section 6, and the seller will have a legal duty to ensure that the equipment, as supplied, is safe for use.

Section 6 also covers the sale of second-hand plant and machinery at auctions, including farm sales. Both auctioneers and sellers can have legal duties, but the extent of each party's responsibility will vary with the contract or type of auction taking place. The overall duty to supply a machine safe for use at work must therefore be accepted as a shared responsibility.

PRIVATE SALES

If a person or business sells work equipment to another person (e.g., farmer to farmer) then Section 6 will apply and the seller will have to ensure that the equipment he sells is safe for work.

The addition of 'sold as seen' on an item of work equipment, on an invoice, advert or other paperwork, does not take away these legal duties imposed on the seller, and the item will need to be made safe prior to sale.

TRADING-IN (PART-EXCHANGE) EQUIPMENT

Dealers often take in equipment on a part-exchange basis, or they buy in equipment for resale. In such circumstances, the purchaser is not buying in the equipment to use at work, and the seller will not have legal duties as it will not fall within scope of Section 6. However, if the dealer is planning to sell the equipment for use at work, then Section 6 will apply and the dealer will need to ensure any defects are put right prior to sale.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BUYING SECOND-HAND EQUIPMENT?

Buyers should satisfy themselves that any second-hand article purchased for use at work is safe for use. They should be supplied with adequate information about the intended use of the equipment and with all complex machines, such as tractors, telescopic handlers and potato harvesters, this will involve obtaining the operator's handbook.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Some common defects found on agricultural machines.

- missing or defective guards for dangerous parts such as cutters, chopping mechanisms, belts, pulleys, chains, sprockets, and rotating shafts.
- missing or defective stand-off guards for pick-ups, tines or blades
- poorly maintained or unsuitable guard fastenings particularly those that cover power transmission parts such as PTO shafts;
- other safety devices defeated or not working including emergency stops
- inadequate or defective brakes including parking brakes
- controls not clearly identified or marked to indicate their function
- no safe means of access provided to the operators' position
- warning signs, decals, and other instructions hard to read or in foreign languages.

Health and safety concerns on specific items of agricultural machinery include:

- tractors with missing/damaged cabs or lacking roll over protective structures (ROPS);
- potato harvesters with inadequately guarded haulm and cleaning rollers;
- power harrows with missing/damaged or inadequate stand-off guards.
- sprayers not fitted with chemical induction systems, emergency clean water containers and/or protective clothing lockers.

It really helps if you know what is legal and what isn't both in using equipment and in buying in machinery. Let the buyer beware but also let you as the seller, be honest and point out any discrepancies.

BOMFORD
PC08

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 apply to any equipment that you use at work, which can include tractors, air compressors, chainsaws and even ladders. They require that equipment be suitable for the task, properly maintained and guarded, and that employees receive adequate training and information about the equipment.

Compact, reliable value.

EK1-261 Compact Tractor /24HP 4WD

from only
£9,450* +VAT
*Available at participating dealers

+

with 5yrs Kubota Care Warranty
as standard.

The versatile choice for light implement work, combining simple operation and powerful performance.

Stock available now – talk to your dealer today.

www.kubota.co.uk

Request a quote

For Earth, For Life
Kubota

COWLING AGRICULTURE
New & Used Compact Tractors &
Smallholder Machinery Specialists
GET THE LOGS IN READY FOR WINTER!!
Logsplitter £699 Sawbench £1595
Linkbox £375 Tipping Trailers £1995

NEW LANDLEGEND
4x4 TRACTORS
30hp, 40hp & 50hp
from £8500
available with
Cabs,
4in1 Loaders
& Backhoes

USED TRACTORS 2&4WD
16hp+ From £2200
fully serviced, with warranty

Huge machinery selection always in stock
Can deliver nationwide from £69
Prices +vat
www.cowlingagri.com
Email: clive@cowlingagri.co.uk / sid@cowlingagri.co.uk
Call/email for FREE Brochure & Latest Stock List
Mob 07508 074744 / 07813 847128 Tel 01458 250978

GET MORE FROM
The COUNTRY SMALLHOLDER

SIGN UP TO OUR FREE NEWSLETTER

All the latest news, updates, exclusive competitions and much more straight to your inbox!

BONUS CONTENT FROM COUNTRY SMALLHOLDER AND Poultry

SIGN UP TODAY AT

Your trailer should meet all the requirements for good animal welfare

Transporting livestock – thoughts on trailers

John Sones gives top towing tips and looks at the legalities

It should be obvious that trailers need to be firmly attached to the vehicle but this does involve maintenance and checks to ensure that it is completely safe. There's a lot of weight on that tow bar and hitch - and roads are increasingly bumpy with an increase in potholes almost everywhere.

Checks attaching the trailer include making sure the tow ball and tow hitch are a good fit and the latch and safety chain are secured in place. On larger trailers, the safety chain will operate the emergency brake if the trailer becomes disconnected. Firmly connect the trailer lights plug into the socket and check that all lights and indicators are working correctly which may require some assistance. Also ensure that the number plate on the trailer matches the towing vehicle.

WHAT COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG? CHECK AND CHECK AGAIN

Problems I have had include a mismatch between the plug and socket which was easily solved by buying an adaptor. Also I was so glad that I had added a fog light to the trailer board when I was off to the abattoir in thick fog!

Check also to ensure that tyre pressures of both vehicle and trailer are correct for the load. Underinflation of the tyres can not only cause a trailer to sway affecting the handling but also ultimately could cause a tyre to overheat and burst. If you feel the trailer becoming unstable, take your foot off the accelerator, keep straight and slow down without braking.

The worst case scenario is the trailer jack-knifing. By being able to handle your vehicle and trailer competently, driving to the road and weather conditions and keeping to a suitable speed, hopefully you will never experience this. A good driver will be watching the road a few cars ahead to anticipate changing road conditions and avoid sudden braking which is also very bad for the livestock being transported. Further ways to reduce the risk are ensuring that your vehicle and trailer are safe and legal to use on the road and loaded correctly. Additionally the driver should be physically fit and able to do any task involved in the journey.

TAKE THE TRAILER TRAINING

Trailer training is available and should be considered if you do not feel confident towing and especially reversing. Some abattoirs require accurate reversing in a small space so practice if you think you need to . Getting it wrong will not only cause embarrassment but also annoy those waiting for you to unload especially if there is a queue. Many smallholding clubs put on trailer training for their members.

Reversing requires patience and mirrors and even a rear-view camera can help in this.

LOOK AT THE LAW ON LIVESTOCK

Livestock must be fit to travel and there are legal requirements for their safety and comfort which are very important. The trailer should be suitable for the purpose which includes weather protection, ventilation and no internal projections likely to cause injury. Allow yourself plenty of time as if you are stressed, this is likely to be seen and felt by the animals who may already be unsettled. Careful loading and unloading in a safe and secure manner helps towards this. Long gone are the days of fitting sheep and goats in the back of a car.

I have covered as a layman, albeit one who has moved smallholding animals to field, to sale and to slaughter, some of the practical and legal aspects using a trailer to take livestock to slaughter and there is a lot of guidance on the web. The below sites include some very useful information.

Ultimately the aim is to get your stock to the abattoir on time, legally and safely without unnecessary stress to you or them. As with many things, good preparation and planning is the key.

Unloading livestock safely is as important as loading them

Legal advice and guidance on protecting animal welfare: -
www.gov.uk/guidance/animal-welfare

Humane Slaughter Association – Transport of Livestock: -
www.hsa.org.uk/downloads/publications/transport-online-guide---small-edits-23.01.pdf

SIROMER TRACTORS & EQUIPMENT

01253 799 029 www.siromer.online

WITH YOU
EVERY TURN
OF THE WHEEL

204S 2005 model 744 hours, 20hp, 3yl, 4wd, **£3995**

MK254, 2022 model, 3 hours, 25hp, 3 cyl, 4wd, shuttle gearbox, **£7800**

3aler Ex-Demo, 2022 model, 80 x 70cm round bale, 24-40hp **£5400**

254CH, 2021,10 hours, 25hp, 3cyl, 4wd, shuttle gearbox (8fwd, 8rvse gears) **£8570**

254, 2002 model, 414 hours, 25hp, 3cyl, 4wd, creeper gearbox (12fwd , 4rvse gears) **£3995**

554, 4cyl, 4wd, fitted with cab and front loader, low hours, 2019 model, good working order. **£15500**

40hp, 2021, 130 hours, 4cy, 4wd, synchro shuttle, 8fwd + 8rvse, fitted with loader c/w 4 in 1 bucket **£15850**

30hp, 2021, 26 hours, 3cyl, 4wd, 12fwd + 4rvse, fitted with turf tyres, ex-demonstrator **£7800**

554, 2019 model, low hours, electrics not working, 4cyl, 4wd, fitted with front loader, complete with 4-in-1 bucket. **£14500**

Ex Demo-Finishing mower with side arms. Fitted with two side arms to make mowing around fence posts and under solar panels easy. Three-blade carriers on the main body each with two cutting blades, one blade carrier per sidearm each with two cutting blades. **£1450**

New/shop soiled 6ft galvanised finishing mower. 3 blade design with adjustable cutting height. **£1050**

404, 2021 model, 80 hours, 40hp, 4cyl, 4wd, synchro shuttle, **£15850**

Ex display. Galvanised frame 5ft foot roller £950 plus VAT.

Topper 9ft Ex Demonstrator, galvanised, **£1950**

Lightning, 2021, 243 hours, 35hp, 4cyl, 4wd, shuttle gearbox (8fwd, 8rvse gears) **£7950**

Ex demo- S65 Stone Burier. 1.45 metre. The Siromer stone burier cultivates, buries stones and levels to prepare the perfect bed. **£1650**

204, 20hp, 900 hours, 2003, 20hp, 2cyl. 4wd, fitted with front loader **£5500**

Canopy. Fiberglass canopy. **£175**

SHEEP SHEARING AND HANDLING EQUIPMENT SPECIALISTS.

Yoke available for stand-up dagging £225

Cordless clippers for sheep and cattle £220

A wide range of combs and cutters for all applications

English made heavy-duty work trousers £42.00

New Zealand super crook £37.50

Merino wool socks £12

English made extra long cotton vests £12.50

English made extra thick hoodies £40

FREE CATALOGUE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

INFO@MUDGESHEARING.CO.UK | 01822 615456
WWW.GEORGEMUDGESHEARING.CO.UK

We've got you covered.

For over 50 years Cliverton has led the field in providing specialist insurance for smallholdings and animal-related businesses at affordable prices.

With the essential cover of Public Liability at their core, our policies can be tailored to meet your requirements to cover:

- Smallholdings and Hobby Farms
- Equestrian Businesses
- Educational talks and visits
- Private home
- Animal rescues
- and much more!

For more information or a quote:

Call us on 01328 857921
Email us at info@cliverton.co.uk
Visit our website - cliverton.co.uk

Cliverton right for your insurance 50 YEARS

Cliverton is a trading name of Lycett, Browne-Swinburne & Douglass Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority

The Skye Skyns tannery overlooking Waternish bay

Business Profile: Skye Skyns

Helen Babbs visits a family smallholding with a thriving artisan tannery.

In the early 1980s, Clive and Lydia Hartwell, two teachers from Kent, got a croft in the small village of Waternish on the Isle of Skye. "Dad first came to Skye when he was in the Navy, and fell in love with the place," explains their daughter Jessica, "so he and mum came back, and started keeping Scottish Blackface sheep. Now my partner Ben and I manage the croft, and it's a lovely place to bring up our own children too."

In the smallholding world, three generations of smallholders is not a very unusual pattern. What is unusual is the business which now occupies the low white buildings of the croft: Skye Skyns, an artisan tannery which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. "It was Dad's idea," says Jessica. "Back then, most of the sheepskins from the local abattoirs just went to landfill as animal by-products. He had this lightbulb moment – let's make use of them, right here on Skye!"

STARTING UP

A career first in the Navy and then in teaching hadn't included training in how to tan sheepskins, but that wasn't putting Clive off. "He went down to Northampton to learn the craft of tanning at a technical college," explains Jessica. "Then he got a Nissan hut down by the shore, here in Waternish, and figured out how to fine-tune the tanning process to working with woolskins on a very small scale."

The croft's flock of Hebridean sheep

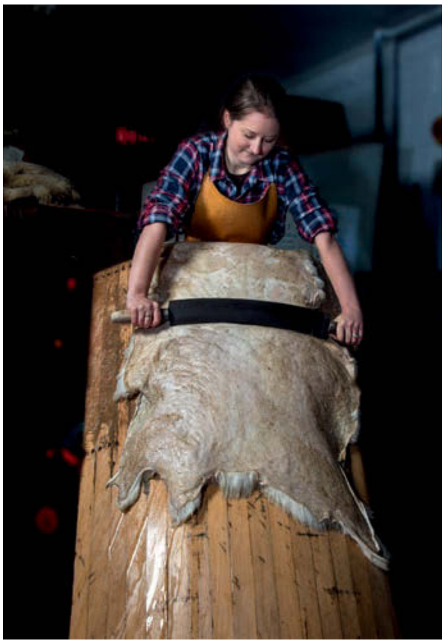
The first sales were from a board propped on the end of the building: 'Sheepskins for Sale'. "Then in the school holidays, as a family we'd go round all the shows and craft fairs with the car boot stuffed with skins," Jessica recalls with a smile, "but it did successfully establish a market for them. Once he had a proven market, Dad got funding from the Highlands & Islands Development Board for a purpose-built tannery, right here on the croft, and fitted it out with old machinery bought from small tanneries in England that were closing down. It gives the place a rather vintage look, as most of the machines date from the 1920s, but it's all still going strong!"

FROM THE FARM

Unlike the machinery, sourcing the sheepskins begins closer to home. "We now have a flock of Hebridean sheep on our croft, instead of the Scottish Blackfaces. They're lovely sheep, very hardy, and produce dark brown skins with a wonderful deep hue," Jessica explains. "We've also tried crossing some of them with a Herdwick ram, which has led to some interesting patterned skins!"

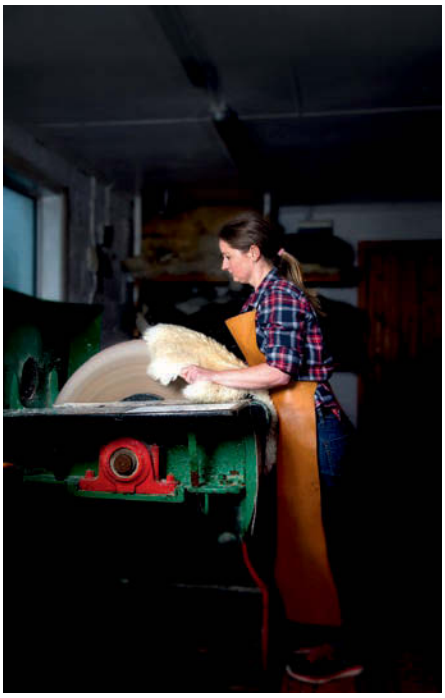
Principal tanner Becky

The skins take 2-3 weeks to process



The sheepskins are scraped by hand before tanning

The wool is brushed smooth to finish



The finished skin is buffed to a soft suede texture

The new croft woodland

More skins are sourced from the nearest abattoir, in Inverness. "We've worked with them for years, as the local abattoirs here on Skye gradually closed," says Jessica. "They do a good job of preparing the skins for us. We're now also looking to source even more skins, direct from farmers and rare-breed sheep keepers throughout the UK. These are part of our new range of sheepskins called "Tus", the Gaelic word for 'Origin', which are fully traceable right back to the farm they were raised on."

MORE THAN A PINCH OF SALT

The season for skins runs from September to January, before the winter wool growth becomes too long for processing and tends to break. The process starts with salting, as soon as possible after slaughter. "Every bit of the "wet side" of the skin needs to be covered in a thick layer of coarse salt, which prevents the skin rotting and shedding the wool," Jessica explains. "The skins then come here to the tannery, and are stacked in the skin store until we're ready to use them. A well-salted skin can keep for up to a year."

When the skins come out of the store, the first step is to get all this salt off again. "They go into a cold water bath for 24 hours to rinse off the salt, then we move them into a hot soapy wash, which starts to break down and draw out the fats from the skin. This is what makes tanning such a skilled craft," Jessica notes. "It's a fine balance, as if the water is too hot, the wool is damaged – you have to judge the look and feel of the process for every individual skin."

FLESHING AND PICKLING

When the skins come out of the wash, the process looks a bit mediaeval as the tanners spread the wet skins over workbenches and scrape them with long, curved "fleshing blades". "This removes the surface fat and any fragments of flesh still attached to the skin," Jessica explains. "It's hard work, and takes a lot of talent to get it all clear without cutting through the skin. The scraped skins then go into a pickle bath, which is a salty, acidic wash that stabilises the skin and lowers its pH, ready for tanning."

The skins can wait in the pickle bath for several days, until there's space for them in the actual tanning bath. "The skins soak for a minimum of 48 hours in the tanning solution," Jessica describes. "This is the point where the skin really changes into leather – it's so much thicker and stronger when it comes out. They're also heavy," she

The reed bed filters the tannery effluent

The tannery showroom

notes. "We lift them out carefully so as not to waste any of the liquid, then rinse them and hang them up to dry without any folds."

The tanning liquid used to be mineral based, but is now a sustainable, plant based mix. "Four years ago, we switched to using dried mimosa bark for tanning, as an eco-friendly renewable resource," Jessica explains. "This comes from South Africa, where it's sustainably harvested from the trees on a rotation system."

A FINE FINISH

When the tanned skins are dried out, they resemble thick sheets of rigid cardboard. "They sound like a drum, too," Jessica notes, "so we start by oiling the skins with a simple mineral oil. Then they go into the tumbler, which beats the skins round and round until they're flexible again. This is quite noisy, so we run it overnight!" she chuckles. After several nights in the tumbler, the softened skins are then combed through on the wool side, and buffed on the leather side against a granite wheel, similar to a grindstone, to produce the familiar 'buttery suede' finish. "The wheel does about 100 revolutions per minute, so it's quite a skill to get a soft finish without wearing a hole. Finally, we apply a lanolin conditioner to the skins, and put them into the barrel iron, which heats them and spreads the conditioner evenly through the wool."

From the first wash to the last brush, the whole tanning process takes 2-3 weeks, and quite a lot of labour. "We now have a full-time principal tanner, Becky, plus an assistant tanner, and the rest of us pitch in when needed," Jessica explains, "both for the tanning and on the shop side of things." As for many rural businesses, the internet is a great advantage for Skye Skyns. "We have a shop in Portree, and most of our sales are in the UK, but our skins do go all over the world," says Jessica. "We often get a little "hub" of people, such as in Texas, where one person has visited us, and then their friends and family want sheepskins too." For those who visit the croft, there's a beautiful showroom with views over Waternish bay, the Yurt Cafe for refreshments, and guided tours of the tannery too. "We like to tell the story of leather, and educate people about the whole craft of tanning."

The view from the tannery

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

It's a craft that hasn't changed much in hundreds of years, but Jessica and team are still striving to make it more sustainable. "We've started planting a new woodland, and installed a reed bed system for processing the effluent from the tannery," she describes keenly. "Essentially, it's a series of gravel beds planted with native reeds that we put in as plug plants, and their roots filter the effluent as it trickles through the gravel, so it's clear water by the time it comes out." The effluent is stored in a holding tank and drip fed to the reed beds, which allows the coarser sediment to settle out."

This sludge is mainly mimosa bark fragments, which are then composted and used to fertilise the woodland. "It's really completing the cycle of tree – wool – tree, which is our ideal. It's impossible to live and work somewhere as beautiful as Waternish and not feel responsible for doing your bit to take care of the environment around you."

For more information visit: www.skyeskyns.co.uk

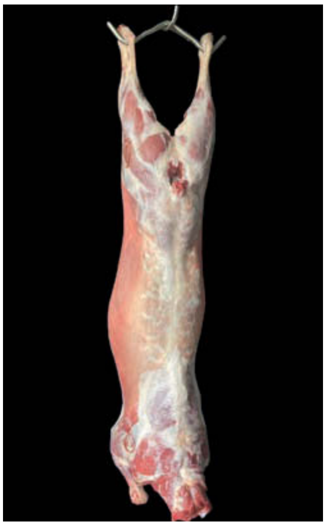
To find out about joining the producer network: www.skyeskyns.co.uk/sheepskin-sourcing

Introducing the British Boer and Meat Goat Association (BBMGA)

There are approximately one billion goats or more worldwide, according to estimates from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. This population has more than doubled in the last four decades, partly due to the demand for more goat products. Moreover, when it comes to livestock, goats can offer so much in the way of potential. They provide meat, milk, fibre, and skins as well as being used as pack and companion animals, kept as pets, and even having a place in many ceremonies and celebrations.

Globally, goat meat accounts for 60% of red meat consumption and 10% of all meat. Over the last decade, goat meat has begun to increase in popularity in the UK.

The newly-formed British Boer and Meat Goat Association (BBMGA) was founded in 2022 by a group of passionate pedigree Boer goat breeders from across the UK, focusing on encouraging and building on the growing interest in goat meat, both within the farming community and the general public.


Carcass from a percentage Boer buck kid

The BBMGA doesn't discriminate based on colour, meaning animals of all colours, such as dappled Boer goats, can be registered.

The board members are currently as follows: Philip Knapp, Charlotte Riggs, Debbie Marshall, Peter Tubby, and Philip Wooster, alongside Secretary Nicola Knott, all long-standing Boer and/or Kiko keepers.

The board has worked tirelessly over the last decade to increase the genetics and diversity of British Boer goats. Moreover, after the original import of Kiko genetics into the UK from the USA, the BBMGA helped expand the new breed to wider markets. The Kiko was originally bred in New Zealand from feral goats, crossed with dairy-type bucks for frame and milk yield. They were selected heavily for survivability and carcass yield, creating thrifty, hardy animals. Kikos are commonly crossed with Boers in the USA, producing prime market animals with minimal inputs.

Boers are often considered the Aberdeen Angus of the goat world. Goat has fabulous health benefits compared to other red meats, lower in cholesterol and saturated fats. However, most UK goats used for meat production to date have been unwanted billy kids and cull does from the dairy industry.

The BBMGA encourages pedigree breeding of Boer goats and all other types of British meat goats, the core goal being to promote the use of commercial Boer and meat goat in the wider industry while simultaneously promoting the well-being of members and protecting the interests of the pedigree Boer and Meat Goat/goat meat sectors.

The key areas of focus are:

1. Boosting pedigree Boer Goat genetics by encouraging imports and exports in order to stimulate global genetic diversity
2. Promoting meat goats by supporting members in raising productive goats on whatever rearing system best suits them and their animals
3. Representing all goat meat producers, regardless of breed
4. Offering affordable registrations

There are three herdbooks, each representing a different type of breeding animal:

1. British Boer (from first-cross 50% kids to purebred/fullblood 100% Boers)
2. International Boer (international Boer Goat registry for non-British breeders)
3. Meat Goats (representing all other meat goats, e.g., Kiko and Cashmere types)

Membership and registration of stock are open to anyone in the UK, from hobby breeders to those running large, commercial herds.

With extensive commercial Boer/meat goat knowledge, the BBMGA strives to support every aspect of keeping Boers and meat goats. In addition to the main pedigree registry, the BBMGA also encourages greater use of Boer and Meat Goats in commercial breeding programmes (to add value to meat stock) and is working on a range of tools and resources for members to help further their own herd management and breeding goals.

To find out more, visit www.bbmga.co.uk

Hay roasted, cured, goat haunch, green sauce, winter chanterelles

FREE ADS

FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT, INCLUDE A PHOTO WITH YOUR AD

Photos are printed free but cannot be returned. We can only accept one advert per reader per issue.

Email: classspecial@talkmediasales.co.uk

Tel: 0906 802 0279
(Lines open Mon to Fri, 10am-4pm, calls cost 65p per minute plus network extras. Calls from mobiles and some networks may be considerably higher). Service provided by Kelsey Media.

By post
Kelsey Publishing Ltd,
The Granary, Downs Court,
Yalding Hill, Yalding, Kent,
ME18 6AL

Reach a dedicated audience of SMALLHOLDERS & ENTHUSIASTS

READERS' ADVERTISEMENT COUPON

CATEGORY: ☐ FOR SALE ☐ WANTED
☐ LIVESTOCK ☐ MACHINERY, TOOLS & EQUIPMENT ☐ MISCELLANEOUS

ADVERT DETAILS:

Title: ....

Price: ....

Main Text (no more than 30 words): ....

....

....

....

....

....

....

....Ad Contact Number: ....

....

ADVERTISER DETAILS:

Name: ....

Address: ....

....

....Town: ....

....

County: ....

Postcode: ....

Telephone: ....

Email (optional): ....

PRIVATE ADVERTISERS ONLY MUST SIGN HERE:

(The goods advertised are not offered by way of trade.)

CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTANCE

- We reserve the right to refuse any advert.
- Adverts are published subject to space. Kelsey Media cannot guarantee specific issues into which adverts will appear.
- This service is for private advertisers only. Anyone trading more than 12 adverts in a year will be regarded as trade.
- Traders please contact the sales person on 01732 441642.
- Kelsey Media reserves the right to edit adverts that exceed the 30 word limit.
- Kelsey Media cannot be held responsible for illegible or inaccurate advert descriptions.
- Advertisers can include one photograph free of charge. This photo will be published subject to space and cannot be returned. Emailed digital photos must be in JPEG format.
- All adverts and images will be kept on file for a maximum of 6 months.
- Advertisements may appear in other relevant Kelsey Media publications.
- When submitting an advert, you all assign all copyright of the words and photos to Kelsey Media and agree to waive all moral rights in relation to the advert.
- Kelsey Media's customer service representatives reserve the right to terminate telephone calls if the caller becomes abusive.
- By submitting advertisements to Kelsey Media you are agreeing to the above Terms & Conditions.
- No other correspondence can be entered into.
- Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order 1977. Dealers and traders are reminded that they are committing an offence if readers are led to believe that goods are being offered by a private seller.

☐ Tick here to receive email newsletters and offers from The Smallholder.
☐ Please tick here to receive our Smallholder e-newsletter and offers.
☐ Tick the box if you are happy to receive this information about other Kelsey publications, events, promotions and products that may be of interest to you.

For further information please refer to our Privacy policy at https://www.kelsey.co.uk/privacy-policy/

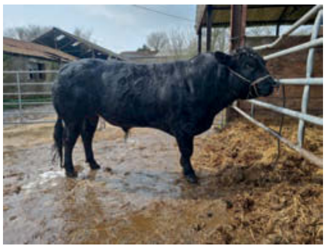
1X PEDIGREE SUSSEX BULL

£POA. Mapsons Major 1st is an impressive 3 year old bull. Quiet, good temperament with exceptional fertility results and vetting credentials. Very efficient animal with fast growth rates TEL: 07796 156632, Sussex

PEDIGREE BEEF SHORTHORN

£POA. Meonhill Rave 2yrs Ready for work. High Health Herd TEL: 07766 524320, Hampshire

LIMOUSIN X BLUE BREEDING BULLS



£POA. Limousin x British Blue Breeding bull, 23 months. Well grown, naturally done. Shapey, good feet and legs. Naturally born. Good mobility and temperament. Ready to work. TEL: 07595 830165, Kent

PYGMY GOAT KIDS

£275. Ready for their forever home. Females and wethers available. CPH number required. TEL: Cath 07739 383266, text or call, near Faversham

1X PEDIGREE SUSSEX BULL

£POA. Mapsons Major 3rd is a well bred impressive young bull. He's from a low risk ,4 year TB area from a health accredited herd. He has fast growth rates and exceptional fertility & vetting. Reared on an extensive system and selected for efficiency, fertility and hardiness. TEL: 07796 156632, Sussex

BEST QUALITY WEANERS

£55. First class commercial hybrid weaners, Duroc/Large White/Landrace crosses. Very fast growing vigorous pigs with superb carcase quality. They can be taken to bacon weight without getting too fat, even if milk fed. A first time customer of the last batch phoned me to say they were gaining 1kg ady of lean meat at cutter size! Ready from mid June. TEL: Anne 01323 440147 for more info or to book.Evenings best or leave message on answerphone, Sussex

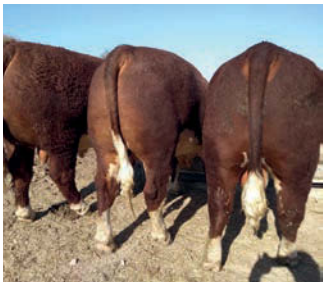
WELSH COLLIE PUPPIES

£450 each. Black and white, short coated, Both parents are working. There are 6 bitches & 2 dogs, they will be ready mid July. Viewing welcome Viewing welcome TEL: Martin 07885 306055 Please phone (NO TEXTS), Ashford, Kent

POINT OF LAY HYBRID PULLETS

POA. Various breeds and colours including Black Rock, Light Sussex, discount for quantity TEL: 01795 532848 / 07759 320496, Faversham, Kent

PEDIGREE POLLED HEREFORD BULLS



Reasonable priced. Top quality, quiet, easy calving bulls with good structure, high carcase values and rapid growth rates. From low risk TB area. All bulls scanned, weight recorded and blood tested for IBR, BVD, Lepto and Johnes. BVD vaccinated. Some HCS Superior carcase sires, all bulls qualify for meat scheme premiums. TEL: 01243 262252 or 07881 944394, West Sussex

MUSCOVY DUCKS

£POA. For sale or donation to charity TEL: 01892 654720, Near Tunbridge Wells

LOHMANN BROWN POINT OF LAY PULLETS

£10 each. TEL: 01892 723108 / 07807 041996, Kent

VALAIS BLACKNOSE PEDIGREE

POA. A selection of Valais Blacknose pedigree rare-breeds for sale. Various prices. TEL: 07845222114, Kent.

SMALL BREEDING HERD

£POA. Small breeding herd consisting of 1 stud male and 3 females, all pregnant. Crias due Aug-23. All BAS registered. Located in Inverness, Highlands. TEL: 07880747381.

CALVES

£POA. Regular supply of dairy and dairy cross calves from all year round calving herd TEL: 07847 300320, Kent

REGISTERED MIDDLE WHITE SOW

POA. Registered Caela Fair Lady sow, born July 2018. Has sired one litter. Up to date health records, wormed and vaccinated. TEL: Stacey 07849 701030

GOSLINGS

£15 each. Viewing welcome TEL: Martin 07885 306055, Please phone (NO TEXTS) Ashford, Kent

DUCKLINGS

£8 each. Viewing welcome TEL: Martin 07885 306055, Please phone (NO TEXTS) Ashford, Kent

REGISTERED HEREFORDS

£POA. 2 year old Breeding heifers ready for the bull, Yearling heifers and steers available after 17th April TEL: 01825 890946, Uckfield

WAYGU X SUSSEX X

£475. 2 Waygu Cross heifers 8 months old £375 each. 1 Sussex Cross steer 8 months old £475. TEL: 01424 843961, if no answer please leave message – selling on behalf of my dad

POL HYBRID HENS

£12 each. Viewing welcome TEL: Martin 07885 306055 Please phone NO TEXTS, Ashford, Kent

BEST QUALITY WEANERS

£60. Peitrain/ Large White/ Duroc cross commercial hybrid weaners for sale ready early January. These pigs will make rapid lean growth and have 1st class comformation. They are bred to reach bacon weight without getting too fat even when milk fed. Best of all sorts of pig! Entertaining and photogenic in the pen, never disappointing in the freezer. TEL: Anne 01323 440147 (answerphone), Sussex

ORGANIC SADDLEBACK WEANERS

£65. Piglets 8 weeks old and ready to go in early Feb. All born and raised outside so electric fence trained. Saddlebacks from pedigree stock Carl x Ivy lines. 26 available. Mix of gilts and boars Happy to spilt. TEL: 07970 149467, Near Arundel, West Sussex

OXFORD SANDY AND BLACK WEANERS

£45. Born 1st November. Ready to go middle of January. 5 older weaners ready to go now. TEL: 07989 235447, Near Sittingbourne, Kent

GERMAN SHEPHERD X POLISH TATRA SHEEPDOG PUPPIES

£POA. Lovely puppies ready 18/12/22. My 5 year old bitch has just had her first litter of adorable puppies. Father is a GSD X Tatra Sheepdog but black which is unlike the Full Tatra Sheepdog which are all white. These dogs have a lovely nature just like the GSD. TEL: 07812 345211, Sussex

HEREFORD BULL

£POA. 3 Hereford pedigree Bulls. 2 at 18 months and 1 stock bull at 5 years. Come from prize winning herd. Ready to work. We can deliver TEL: Charlie 01732 886 002 / 07796 553418, Kent

PURE BREED WELSUMMER AND CREAM LEGBAR COCKERELS

£6. Born June 2022 TEL: 07778 026675, Kent

MANGALITZA BOAR

£60. Lovely 6 year old red Mangalitza boar for sale. Good breeder, lovely temperament and electric fence trained. Losing our land for houses, thus a sad sale. TEL: 07530 901504, Essex

MANGALITZA SOW

£175. Beautiful 3 year old mangalitza sow for sale. Blonde with dark red ears. Has produced some lovely coloured litters. Very friendly good Mum. Electric fenced trained. Pure bred but can not be registered. Losing land for housing so a sad sale TEL: 07530 901504, Essex

LARGE BLACK PIGLETS/WEANERS

£40 each. Large black piglets/ weaners available, mum and dad can be seen. Pedigree. TEL: 07885 912444, Kent

CREAM LEGBAR PULLETS

£15 each. Viewing welcome TEL: Martin 07885 306055 Please phone (NO TEXTS), Ashford, Kent

SHIRE STALLION

Looking for a new home. Due to a bereavement, this Shire Stallion is looking for a new home. More info available on request. TEL: 07510 139126, Sussex

BEST QUALITY WEANERS

£60. Commercial hybrid weaners, Peitrain/Large White/ Duroc cross, ready early January. (Picture taken at 3 weeks) These pigs have exceptional confirmation, are very fast growing and will not get too fat even at bacon weight. They are ideal for milk feeding, and are very robust, happy in a deep litter ex cow pen. Book now, I will re-advertise next month with updated pictures if I have any left unbooked by then. TEL: Anne 01323 440147 (answerphone), Sussex

AUSTRALORP COCKEREL

£20. A good example of this fine breed. Large, heavy fowl, said to be a study and hardy breed. 18 months old. TEL: 07720 756330, Kent

BRITISH WHITE BULL

POA. : “Scottow Montgomery” - a 2 year old British White Bull has passed breed society inspection and now he is ready for work. TB4 area. Viewing welcome. Tel: 01692 538286, Norfolk.

CHINESE PAINTED QUAIL

£6 each. Cocks & Hens. No incubator and no heat. Raised in aviary. Nice birds. TEL: 07493 446302, Worcs

SILVER PHEASANTS

£50. Quartet 2022, hatched cock colouring up. TEL: 07391 176916, Sandown

PHEASANTS

£20-£30 each. Four x 2021 Lewis Silver females, £25 each. Four x 2022 Lewis Silver females, £20 each. One x 2022 Lewis Silver male, £25. Three x 2022 Silver females, £20 each. One x Silver male, £30. TEL: 07493 446302, Worcs

ORNAMENTAL PHEASANTS

£30 pair. Summer golds, 2021. TEL: 07446 836400, Glocs

ALPACA

£2,300 ONO. Proven stud alpaca. BAS registered, vaccinated, micro chipped, wormed, halter, 7 years old. fathered 5 cria's. cria's in field to see. friendly boy, have to sell as need new blood lines. Tel: 07971 404772, Llantrisant.

BELTED GALLOWAY

£POA. 4 heifers approx 15 months old, really well marked TEL: 01403 700754, Sussex

BLACK WELSH MOUNTAIN RAM

£120. Two year old Ram. Flock & Breed registered, Fircones Clarinet UK/285031 Sire Bongo Drum UK/285031/176 Dam Shadow UK/285031/60 Proven to have sired lambs born in 2021 & 2022 £80 each. Shearling ewes TEL: Maggie 01428 75128, Hampshire

BOER GOATS

£POA. 2 nannies, 1 billy – 5 months old, pure bred unregistered Boer goats. Will split up. TEL: 07748 840049, Kent

CHAROLLAIS, BELTEX X CHAROLLAIS SHEARLING RAMS

From £400. Charollais, Beltex X Charollais & Dutch Spotted Shearling Rams. MV Accrited. Grass fed TEL: 07957 881736 / 07852 540563, Sussex

CHAROLLAIS EWES

£POA. 7 Charollais shearling ewes from Weeksland flock, performance recorded. Heptavac P & Clik treated. Private sale or Ashford Market 14th Oct. David Morphett. TEL: 07775 844586, Kent

CHAROLLAIS RAMS

£POA. Shearling rams from Weeksland Flock, M.V. accredited & performance recorded. High muscle score. TEL: David Morphett 07775 844586, Kent

Soay Sheep Flock

£480. Mixed Colours – 1 Ram, 3 Weathers, 10 Ewes. All healthy and regularly wormed. CPH Required TEL: 07812 345211, Sussex

HEIFERS

£400 each. 10 Aberdeen Angus Cross Heifers, 8 months old. TEL: 07751 141793, Hampshire

SIMMENTAL BULLS

£POA.Polled Simmental bulls, pedigree , high health status, TB4. A 6 year old homozygous bull (all calves will have no horns) for sale due to a lot of daughters in the herd. A selection of younger bulls polled and halter broken 10 /15 months. TEL: Chris 07702 503081, Essex

STEERS

£500 each. 8 Aberdeen Angus Cross Steers, 8 months old. TEL: 07751 141793, Hampshire

DAIRY CROSSBRED STEERS

£420 each. 12 Dairy Crossbred Steers, 10 months old TEL: 07751 141793, Hampshire

DAIRY CROSSBRED STEERS

£400 each. 35 Dairy Crossbred Steers, 10 months old. Out-wintered at present, very hardy. TEL: 07751 141793, Hampshire

POINT OF LAY HYBRID PULLETS

POA. Various breeds and colours including Black Rock, Light Sussex, discount for quantity TEL: 01795 532848 / 07759 320496, Faversham, Kent

OXFORD SANDY AND BLACK X PIETRAIN WEANERS

£50 each. Oxford sandy and black x pietrain Stores. Approx 24 weeks. Viewing welcome TEL: Martin 07885 306055 Please phone (NO TEXTS), Ashford, Kent

LAVENDER PEKING BANTAMS

£15 each. Viewing welcome TEL: Martin 07885 306055 Please phone (NO TEXTS), Ashford, Kent

POL PULLETS

£12 each. Viewing welcome TEL: Martin 07885 306055 Please phone (NO TEXTS), Ashford, Kent

BOER GOATS

£220 each. x2 nannies, 1 year old, pure bred unregistered Boer goats. Will sell separately. TEL: 07748 840049, Kent

CREAM LEGBAR PULLETS

£20 each. Viewing welcome TEL: Martin 07885 306055 Please phone (NO TEXTS), Ashford, Kent

JOIN A SMALLHOLDING CLUB

Welcome to our smallholding club page!

This page lists active smallholding groups and associations around the UK plus other useful societies.

Connecting you with other smallholders, sharing your experiences and knowledge!

LISTINGS

- **British Boer and Meat Goat Association** - We are a pedigree registry for Boer and meat goats, representing breeders and keepers across the country with an overarching goal of increasing the reach and appreciation of goat meat in the agricultural industry and among consumers. *www.bbmga.co.uk*
- **Cheshire Smallholder Association** - A dynamic and enthusiastic group of small scale and hobby farmers, horse enthusiasts and countryside lovers. *www.cheshiresmallholders.org.uk*
- **Cornwall Smallholders**- We are a friendly group of smallholders in Cornwall, including both experienced and novice members with a smallholding of a few square metres, to a holding of over 60 acres. Everyone is welcome to join. Established in 1985, the group provides a forum for smallholders of all persuasions to share ideas, problems and offer a supportive community. *www.cornwallsmallholders.co.uk*
- **Derbyshire Smallholders Association** – An active club holding meetings/events most months. These vary from face to face meetings in a pub to, zoom meetings in the inclement weather and an annual visit which next year is hopefully to Chatsworth Farmyard. **Visit** *www.derbyshiresmallholders.co.uk* **which lists details of meetings events and membership and also a Facebook page.** Contact Andy Dale *secretary@derbyshiresmallholders.co.uk*
- **Donkey Breed Society** – For everyone who loves donkeys and wants to learn about their care, the Society aims to provide and encourage many activities including training days (you do not have to own a donkey to take part), Active Donkey Awards, social events, driving, showing,trekking, ploughing and picnics, and in the support of a variety of community/religious events, *www.donkeybreedsociety.co.uk*

- **Dyfed Smallholders association**-Dyfed Smallholders Association is one of the oldest groups and covers Pembrokeshire , Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion although members from anywhere are welcome. Dyfed Smallholders Association is for anyone who is interested in the countryside; whether you've got 200 acres or a window box for salad there is lots that might interest you. www.dyfedsmallholders.com Secretary Sarah Taylor email: sarahcjtaylor@hotmail.com
- **Fenland Smallholders Club** - Fenland Growers, Smallholders and Crafters is a practical and social club which forms a network of families across Fenland. We are a community of people who can offer each other advice, support and help. The club also facilitates the exchange of produce, skills and ideas. *www.fenlandsmallholders.org.uk*
- **Glamorgan Smallholders** – From window box to field; from bees to cows Glamorgan Smallholders is a group of like-minded people interested in the various aspects of smallholding, self sufficiency and farming in Glamorgan seeking to guide, support and network with each other. We hold monthly meetings in the area visit our website for all the info www.glamorgansmallholders.co.uk
- **Kent Smallholders** - We were formed in 1987 by Hadlow College, to whom we are affiliated. We are privileged to hold our monthly meetings at the college with like minded people, who enjoy the countryside and the rural way of life, which is our only criteria for membership. *www.kentsmallholders.co.uk*
- **Norfolk Smallholders Training group** (**NSTG**) - The group is for like minded people interested in any aspects of smallholding such as sustainable living, crafts, fruit and vegetable growing and animal husbandry on a small scale. It offers training workshops about different aspects of animal husbandry. Crafts such as spinning, felting ,using green wood and willow. Skills such as beer making and stock fencing. They produce a quarterly magazine and a monthly emailed newsletter. There are visits to members smallholdings and places of interests, a members helpine, loan equipment and discounts from services and courses. The group attends agricultural shows around the county. It attracts members from throughout East Anglia and beyond. *www.nstg.org.uk. Facebook.*
- **North Pennies Smallholder Association**- North Pennines Smallholders covers areas of Northumberland, Cumbria, and Co Durham. It was set up in 2013 by the North Pennines AONB to to establish a network across the region that will provide benefits for members, their land and also the wildlife within it. Meetings are held through out the year both in person and online with a mix of learning topics, farm visits, and social occasions. New members are very welcome. There is a membership form on our website: *http://www.northpenninessmallholders.co.uk* We also have a private Facebook page which includes non members: @ *northpenninessmallholders.*

- **The Small Farm Training Group** - The Small Farm Training Group (SFTG) is a non-profit organisation based in Sussex, covering the Surrey and Kent areas too. Our aim is to enable members to learn new skills through networking – both online and in person – and from our great value training courses on topics from animal husbandry to land management to crafting. *www.sftg.org.uk*
- **Staffordshire Smallholders' Association** - We are a group interested in animals, horticulture, the countryside and rural activities. The Association is open to all - whether you have several acres of land or just a window box. *www.staffs-smallholders.co.uk*
- **Suffolk Smallholders Society**- Suffolk Smallholders Society - Formed 28 years ago, a group of like minded people interested but not necessarily active in smallholding, self-sufficiency, allotments, fruit and vegetable growing and animal husbandry on a small scale. Group activities and training include 'Nosey Sundays' on a member's holding and the AGM veg show and meal. *www.suffolksmallholders.co.uk*

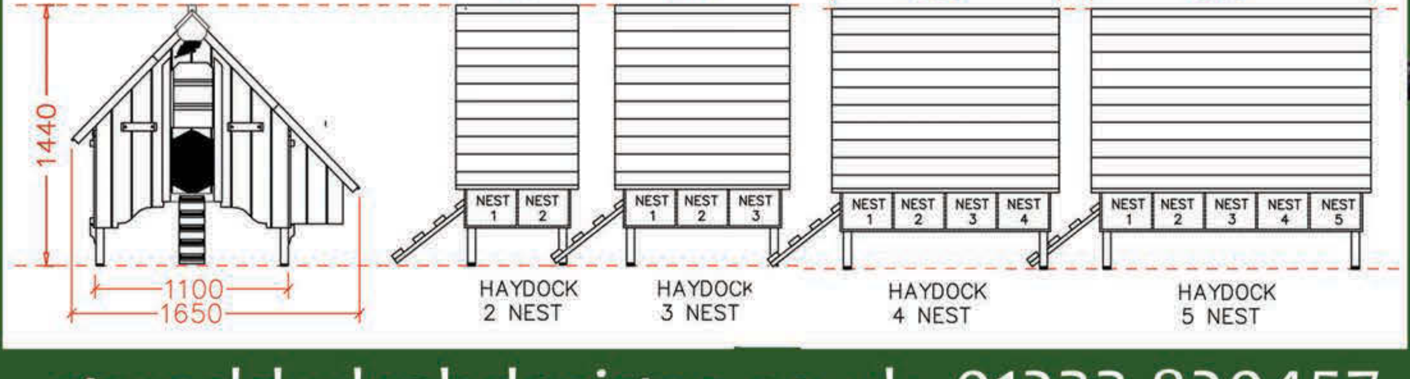
Are you an active smallholding group or association? We would love to hear from you!

Contact Lindsay at lindsay.smallholderclub@outlook.com

Granddad Rob Designs Ltd

45 YEARS OF NOT CUTTING CORNERS

LIFT OFF NEST BANK FITTED WITH NIGHT SHUTTERS
(SAMPLE PIC OF HAYDOCK 1600)
REMOVABLE NESTS & HOUSE WALL OPENS THE HOUSE FOR CLEANING (ALL HAYDOCKS)
Granddad Rob Designs
FORTY YEARS OF NOT CUTTING CORNERS


1440
1100
1650
700
1000
1300
1600
NEST 1
NEST 2
NEST 3
NEST 4
NEST 5
HAYDOCK 2 NEST
HAYDOCK 3 NEST
HAYDOCK 4 NEST
HAYDOCK 5 NEST

granddadrobdesigns.co.uk 01233 820457

NEW!

The COUNTRY SMALLHOLDER

ONLINE BOOKSHOP

CHOOSE FROM OVER 100 BOOKS

ON ALL ASPECTS OF SMALLHOLDING

INCLUDING BOOKS WRITTEN BY THE EDITOR

ORDER TODAY

SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/CSHBOOKS

NEW!

The COUNTRY SMALLHOLDER BOOKSHOP

BOOKS FROM JUST £3.99!

CLICK OR TAP YOUR CHOSEN BOOK

BY THE EDITOR

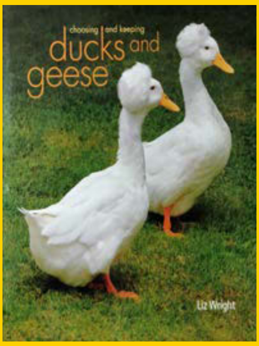
Practical Smallholder Series
Keeping garden hens and ideas with eggs
CHOOSING HENS ■ HEALTH & CARE ■ 40 GREAT EGG RECIPES

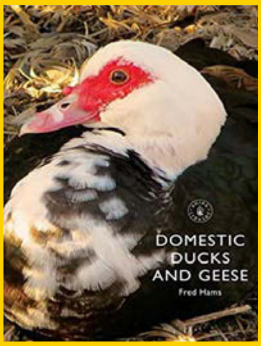
Practical Smallholder Series
Avoid the vet
Best practice for the care of your birds
CARE AND WELFARE ■ PREVENTATIVE MEASURES ■ DISEASE CONTROL

Practical Smallholder Series
Rare breed poultry
• Over 40 breeds • Points to avoid • Breed histories
• Owner ratings • Picking a good bird • Club contacts

Practical Smallholder Series
Keeping Ducks, Geese & Turkeys
BREED DESCRIPTIONS ■ HOUSING & EQUIPMENT ■ DAILY CARE

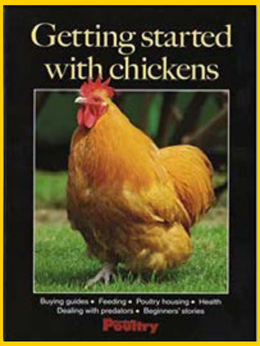
DUCKS, GEESE AND CHICKENS

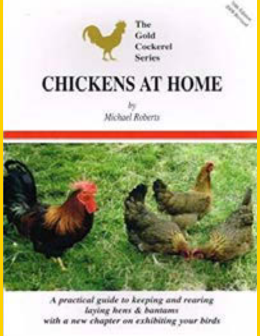

choosing and keeping
ducks and geese
Liz Wright

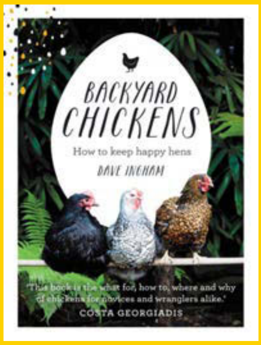

DOMESTIC DUCKS AND GEESE
Fred Hams

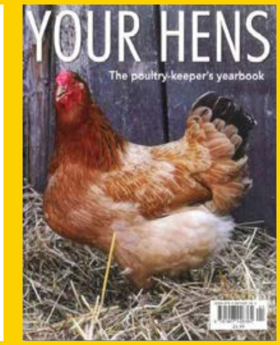
choosing and keeping
chickens
Chris Graham

YOUR HENS
A beginner's guide to domestic poultry and game

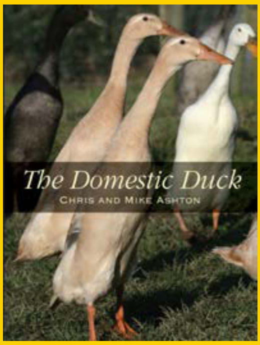

Getting started with chickens
Buying guides • Feeding • Poultry housing • Health
Dealing with predators • Beginners' stories
Poultry


The Gold Cockerel Series
CHICKENS AT HOME
by Michael Roberts
A practical guide to keeping and rearing laying hens & bantams with a new chapter on exhibiting your birds


BACKYARD CHICKENS
How to keep happy hens
DAVE INGHAM
COSTA GEORGIADIS


YOUR HENS
The poultry-keeper's yearbook

Keeping Geese
BREEDS AND MANAGEMENT
Chris Ashton


The Domestic Duck
CHRIS AND MIKE ASHTON

BUY ONLINE AT:

SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/CSHBOOKS

To browse all books, click the link above or scan the QR code

Books subject to availability

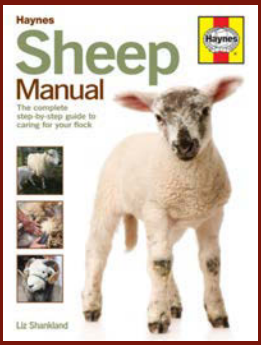
NEW!

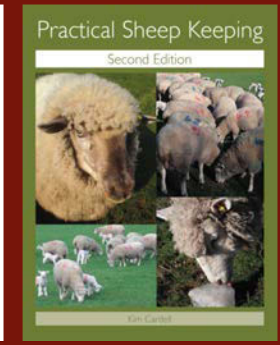
The COUNTRY SMALLHOLDER BOOKSHOP

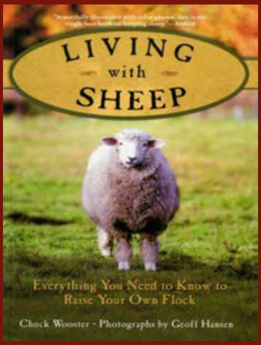
SELECTED BY THE EDITOR OF The COUNTRY SMALLHOLDER MAGAZINE

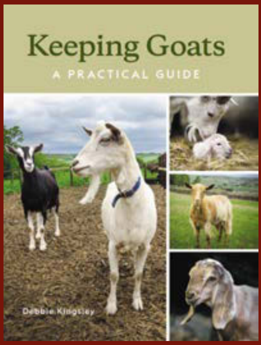
CLICK OR TAP YOUR CHOSEN BOOK

SHEEP, GOATS, PIGS AND BEES

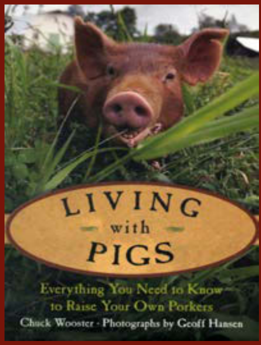

Haynes
Sheep Manual
The complete step-by-step guide to caring for your flock
Liz Shankland

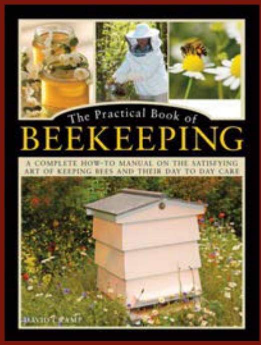

Practical Sheep Keeping
Second Edition
Kim Cardell

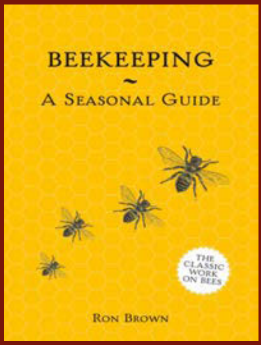

LIVING with SHEEP
Everything You Need to Know to Raise Your Own Flock
Chuck Wooster · Photographs by Geoff Hansen


Keeping Goats
A PRACTICAL GUIDE
Debbie Kingsley

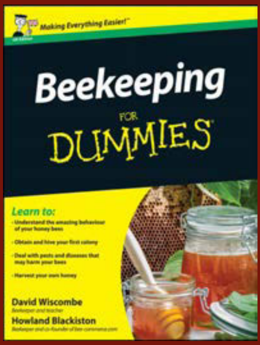
KEEPING PIGS
THE COMPLETE PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR PLEASURE OR PROFIT
Jeremy Hobson and Phil Rant


LIVING with PIGS
Everything You Need to Know to Raise Your Own Porkers
Chuck Wooster · Photographs by Geoff Hansen

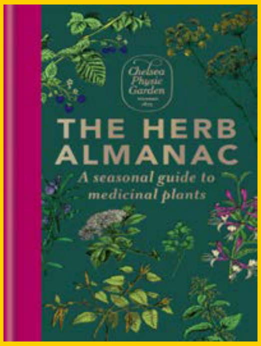

The Practical Book of BEEKEEPING
A COMPLETE HOW-TO MANUAL ON THE SATISFYING ART OF KEEPING BEES AND THEIR DAY TO DAY CARE
DAVID CRAMP


BEEKEEPING
A SEASONAL GUIDE
THE CLASSIC WORK ON BEES
RON BROWN

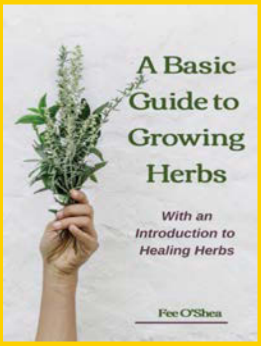
keeping bees
a complete practical guide
Paul Peacock

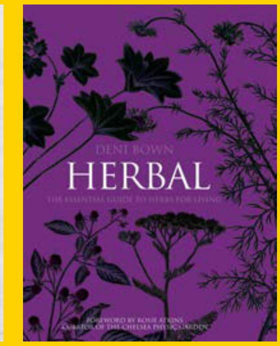

Making Everything Easier!
Beekeeping FOR DUMMIES
Learn to:
David Wiscombe
Howland Blackiston

HERBS AND HERBAL RECIPES


Chelsea Physic Garden
THE HERB ALMANAC
A seasonal guide to medicinal plants

The Herb Gardening Handbook
Andrew Perry of Urban Herbs


A Basic Guide to Growing Herbs
With an Introduction to Healing Herbs
Fee O'Shea


DENI BOWN
HERBAL
THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO HERBS FOR LIVING

Health from the grandmother's garden
Dr. Hulk

BUY ONLINE AT:
SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/CSHBOOKS

To browse all books, click the link above or scan the QR code

Books subject to availability

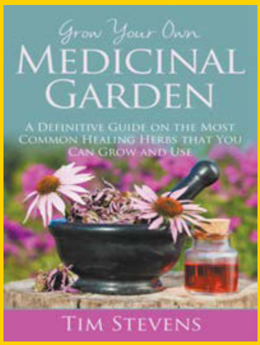
NEW!

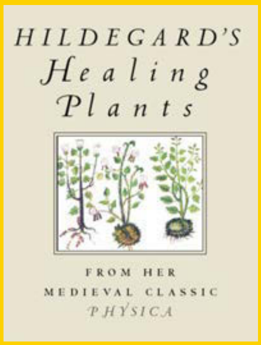
The COUNTRY SMALLHOLDER BOOKSHOP

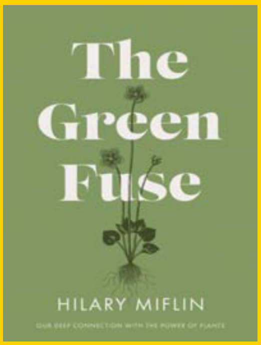
OVER 100
BOOKS TO CHOOSE FROM

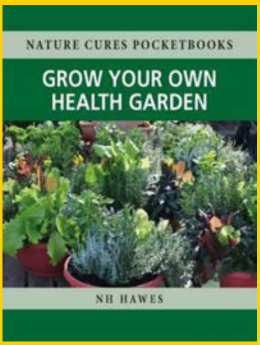
CLICK OR TAP YOUR CHOSEN BOOK

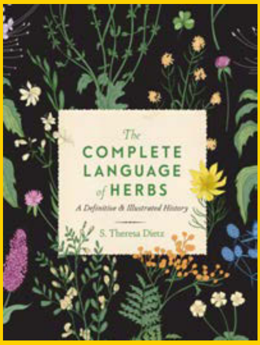
HERBS AND HERBAL RECIPES


Grow Your Own
MEDICINAL GARDEN
A Definitive Guide on the Most Common Healing Herbs that You Can Grow and Use
TIM STEVENS

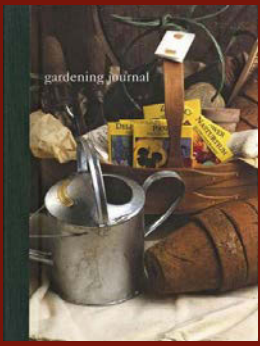

HILDEGARD'S
Healing Plants
FROM HER MEDIEVAL CLASSIC PHYSICA

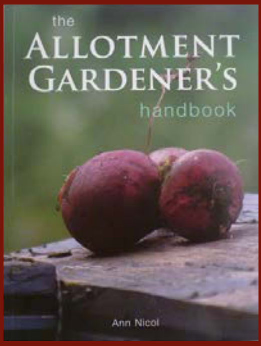

The Green Fuse
HILARY MIFLIN

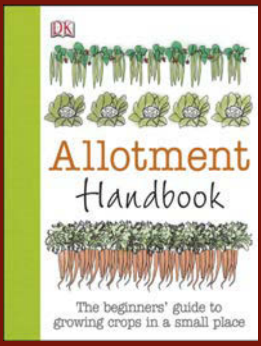

NATURE CURES POCKETBOOKS
GROW YOUR OWN HEALTH GARDEN
NH HAWES

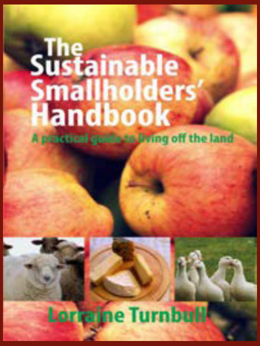

The COMPLETE LANGUAGE of HERBS
A Definitive & Illustrated History
S. Theresa Dietz

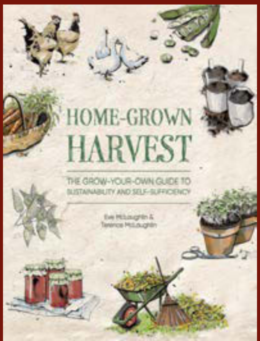
SMALLHOLDING JOURNALS AND HANDBOOKS


gardening journal


the ALLOTMENT GARDENER'S handbook
Ann Nicol

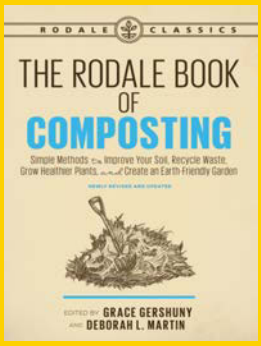

DK
Allotment Handbook
The beginners' guide to growing crops in a small place

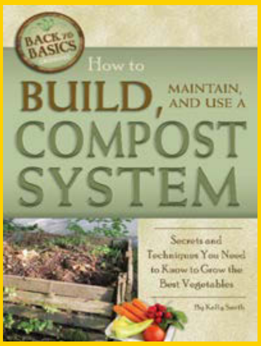

The Sustainable Smallholders' Handbook
A practical guide to living off the land
Lorraine Turnbull

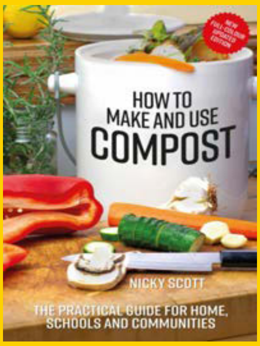

HOME-GROWN HARVEST
THE GROW-YOUR-OWN GUIDE TO SUSTAINABILITY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

COMPOSTING

Compost Teas for the Organic Grower
Eric Fisher


RODALE CLASSICS
THE RODALE BOOK OF COMPOSTING
Simple Methods to Improve Your Soil, Recycle Waste, Grow Healthier Plants, and Create an Earth-Friendly Garden
EDITED BY GRACE GERSHUNY AND DEBORAH L. MARTIN


BACK TO BASICS
How to BUILD, MAINTAIN, AND USE A COMPOST SYSTEM
Secrets and Techniques You Need to Know to Grow the Best Vegetables
By Kelly Smith


HOW TO MAKE AND USE COMPOST
NICKY SCOTT
THE PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR HOME, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

THE COMPOST TOILET HANDBOOK
Joseph Jenkins

BUY ONLINE AT:
SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/CSHBOOKS

To browse all books, click the link above or scan the QR code

Books subject to availability

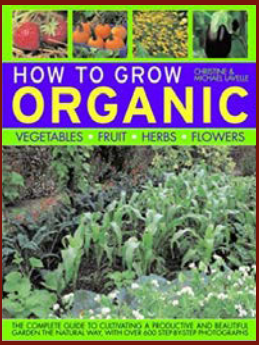
NEW!

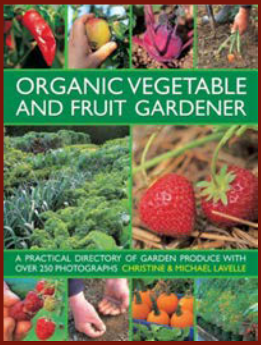
The COUNTRY SMALLHOLDER BOOKSHOP

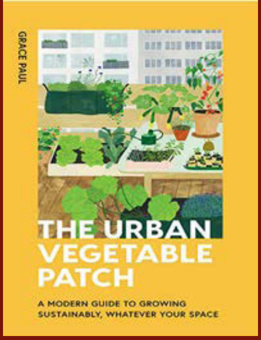
INCLUDING BOOKS WRITTEN BY OUR EDITOR

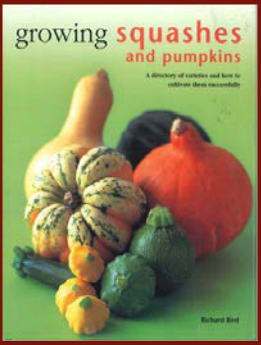
CLICK OR TAP YOUR CHOSEN BOOK

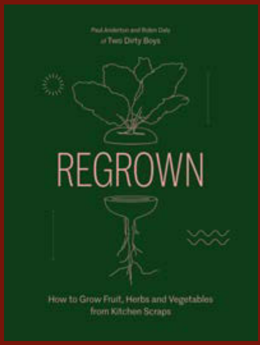
GROWING FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

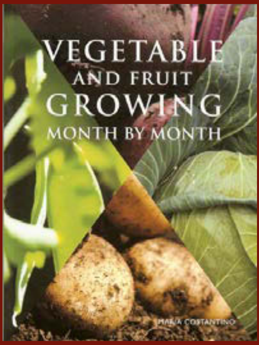

HOW TO GROW ORGANIC
CHRISTINE & MICHAEL LAVELLE
VEGETABLES · FRUIT · HERBS · FLOWERS
THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO CULTIVATING A PRODUCTIVE AND BEAUTIFUL GARDEN THE NATURAL WAY, WITH OVER 600 STEP-BY-STEP PHOTOGRAPHS

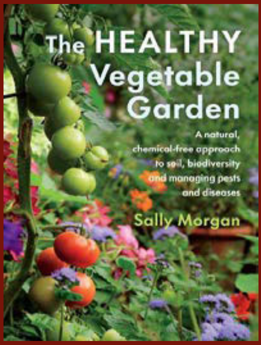

ORGANIC VEGETABLE AND FRUIT GARDENER
A PRACTICAL DIRECTORY OF GARDEN PRODUCE WITH OVER 250 PHOTOGRAPHS CHRISTINE & MICHAEL LAVELLE

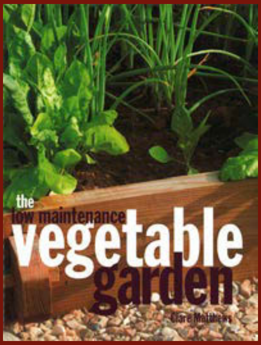

GRACE PAUL
THE URBAN VEGETABLE PATCH
A MODERN GUIDE TO GROWING SUSTAINABLY, WHATEVER YOUR SPACE

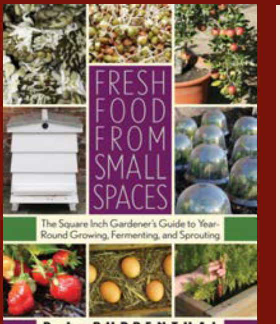

growing squashes and pumpkins
A directory of varieties and how to cultivate them successfully
Richard Bird

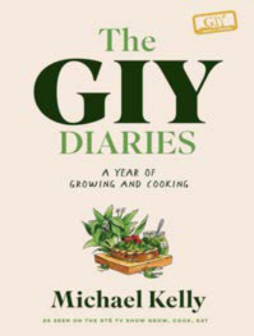

Paul Anderton and Robin Daly of Two Dirty Boys
REGROWN
How to Grow Fruit, Herbs and Vegetables from Kitchen Scraps

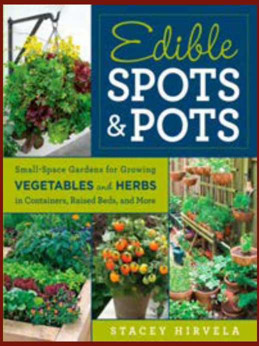

VEGETABLE AND FRUIT GROWING MONTH BY MONTH
MARIA COSTANTINO


The HEALTHY Vegetable Garden
A natural, chemical-free approach to soil, biodiversity and managing pests and diseases
Sally Morgan

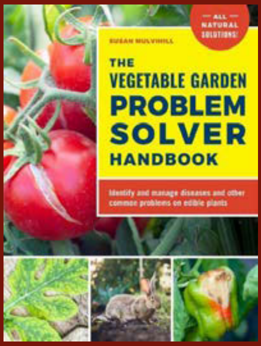

the low maintenance vegetable garden
Clare Matthews

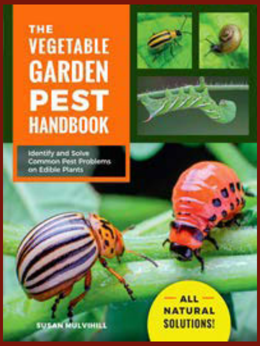

FRESH FOOD FROM SMALL SPACES
The Square Inch Gardener's Guide to Year-Round Growing, Fermenting, and Sprouting
R.J. RUPPENTHAL

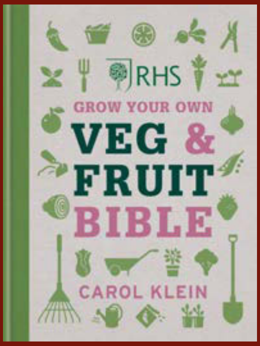

GIY
The GIY DIARIES
A YEAR OF GROWING AND COOKING
Michael Kelly


Edible SPOTS & POTS
Small-Space Gardens for Growing VEGETABLES and HERBS in Containers, Raised Beds, and More
STACEY HIRVELA

REKHA'S KITCHEN GARDEN
REKHA MISTRY


ALL NATURAL SOLUTIONS!
SUSAN MULVIHILL
THE VEGETABLE GARDEN PROBLEM SOLVER HANDBOOK
Identify and manage diseases and other common problems on edible plants


THE VEGETABLE GARDEN PEST HANDBOOK
Identify and Solve Common Pest Problems on Edible Plants
SUSAN MULVIHILL
ALL NATURAL SOLUTIONS!


RHS
GROW YOUR OWN VEG & FRUIT BIBLE
CAROL KLEIN

BUY ONLINE AT:

SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/CSHBOOKS

To browse all books, click the link above or scan the QR code

Books subject to availability

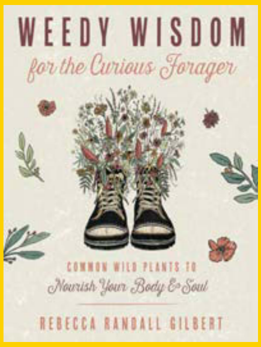
NEW!

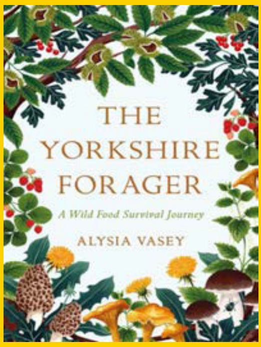
The COUNTRY SMALLHOLDER BOOKSHOP

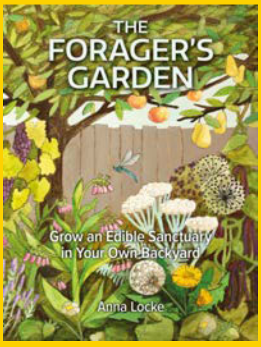
BOOKS FROM JUST £3.99!

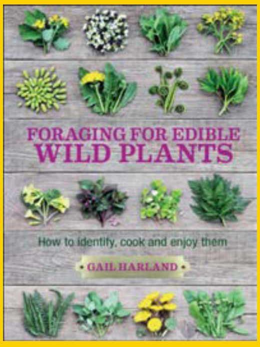
CLICK OR TAP YOUR CHOSEN BOOK

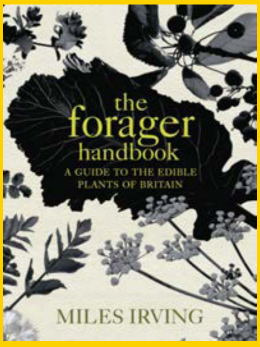
FORAGING


WEEDY WISDOM
for the Curious Forager
COMMON WILD PLANTS TO Nourish Your Body & Soul
REBECCA RANDALL GILBERT

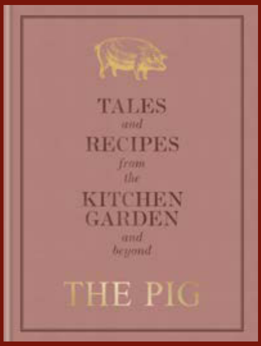

THE YORKSHIRE FORAGER
A Wild Food Survival Journey
ALYSIA VASEY


THE FORAGER'S GARDEN
Grow an Edible Sanctuary in Your Own Backyard
Anna Locke

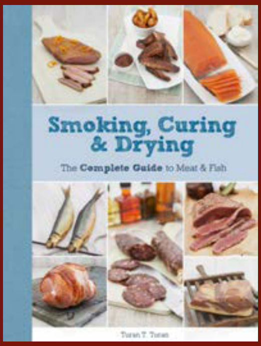

FORAGING FOR EDIBLE WILD PLANTS
How to identify, cook and enjoy them
GAIL HARLAND

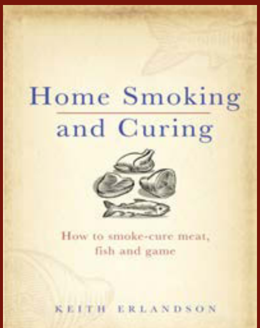

the forager handbook
A GUIDE TO THE EDIBLE PLANTS OF BRITAIN
MILES IRVING

BUTCHERING, CHARCUTERIE AND HOME-SMOKING


TALES and RECIPES from the KITCHEN GARDEN and beyond
THE PIG

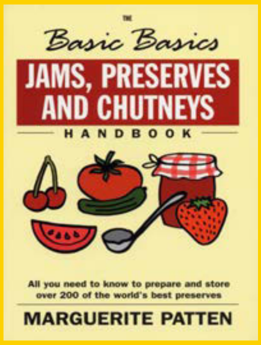
THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO
BUTCHERING, SMOKING, CURING, SAUSAGE, and JERKY MAKING
Philip Hasheider

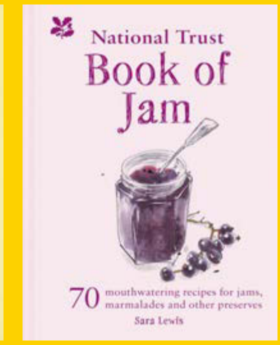

Smoking, Curing & Drying
The Complete Guide to Meat & Fish

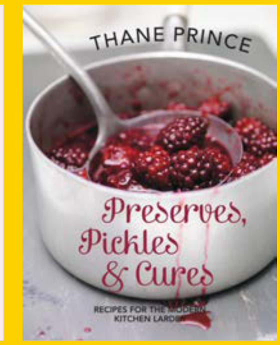

Home Smoking and Curing
How to smoke-cure meat, fish and game
KEITH ERLANDSON

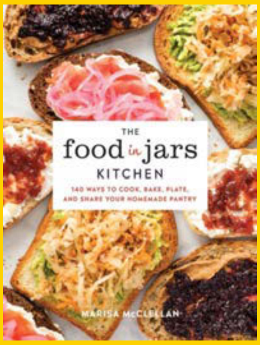
Pure CHARCUTERIE
The Craft & Poetry of CURING MEATS AT HOME
MEREDITH LEIGH

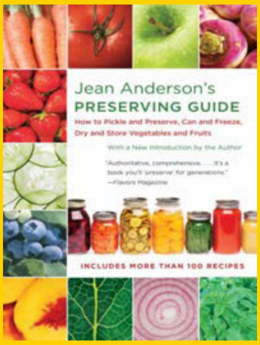
PRESERVING, PICKLING, CURING AND STORING AT HOME


The Basic Basics
JAMS, PRESERVES AND CHUTNEYS
HANDBOOK
All you need to know to prepare and store over 200 of the world's best preserves
MARGUERITE PATTEN


National Trust
Book of Jam
70 mouthwatering recipes for jams, marmalades and other preserves
Sara Lewis


THANE PRINCE
Preserves, Pickles & Cures
RECIPES FOR THE MODERN KITCHEN LARDER


THE food in jars KITCHEN
140 WAYS TO COOK, BAKE, PLATE, AND SHARE YOUR HOMEMADE PANTRY
MARISA McCLELLAN


Jean Anderson's
PRESERVING GUIDE
How to Pickle and Preserve, Can and Freeze, Dry and Store Vegetables and Fruits
INCLUDES MORE THAN 100 RECIPES

BUY ONLINE AT:

SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/CSHBOOKS

To browse all books, click the link above or scan the QR code

Books subject to availability

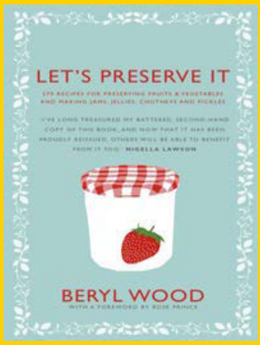
NEW!

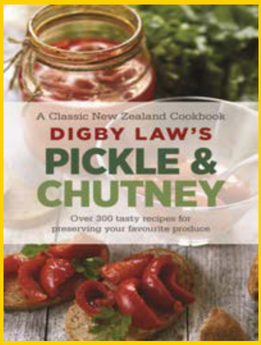
The COUNTRY SMALLHOLDER BOOKSHOP

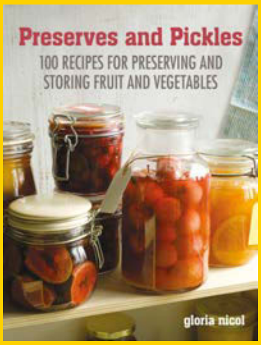
ORDER TODAY!

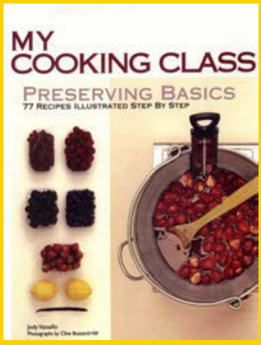
CLICK OR TAP YOUR CHOSEN BOOK

PRESERVING, PICKLING, CURING AND STORING AT HOME

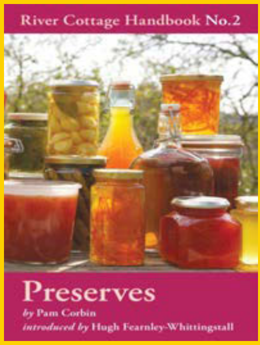

LET'S PRESERVE IT
BERYL WOOD

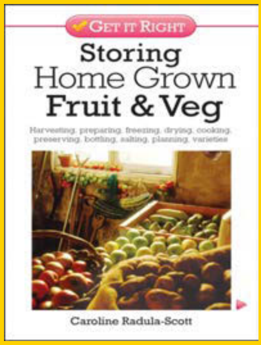

A Classic New Zealand Cookbook
DIGBY LAW'S
PICKLE & CHUTNEY
Over 300 tasty recipes for preserving your favourite produce

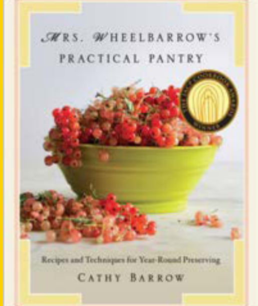

Preserves and Pickles
100 RECIPES FOR PRESERVING AND STORING FRUIT AND VEGETABLES
gloria nicol

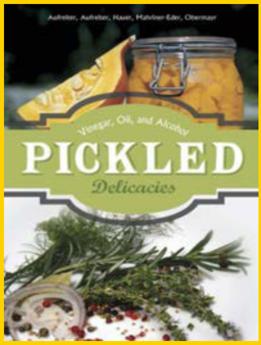

MY COOKING CLASS
PRESERVING BASICS
77 RECIPES ILLUSTRATED STEP BY STEP

the modern preserver
chutneys, jams, pickles and more
kylee newton


River Cottage Handbook No.2
Preserves
by Pam Corbin
introduced by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall

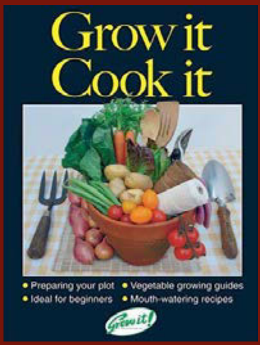

GET IT RIGHT
Storing Home Grown Fruit & Veg
Harvesting, preparing, freezing, drying, cooking, preserving, bottling, salting, planning, varieties
Caroline Radula-Scott

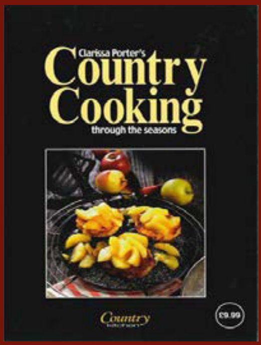

MRS. WHEELBARROW'S PRACTICAL PANTRY
Recipes and Techniques for Year-Round Preserving
CATHY BARROW

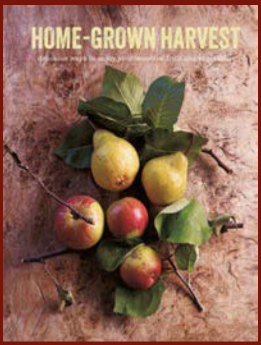

Vinegar, Oil, and Alcohol
PICKLED
Delicacies

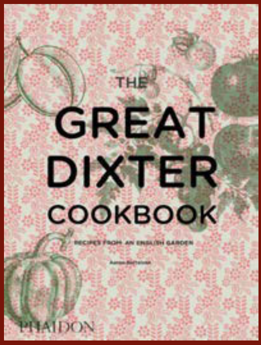
The Joy of Pickling
300 Flavor-Packed Recipes for All Kinds of Produce from Garden or Market
THIRD REVISED EDITION
Linda Ziedrich

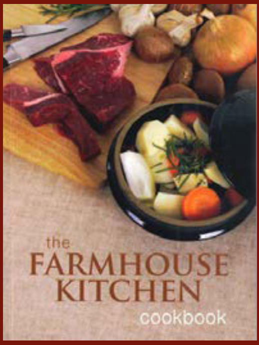
COUNTRY COOKING AND RECIPES


Grow it Cook it
Preparing your plot
Vegetable growing guides
Ideal for beginners
Mouth-watering recipes


Clarissa Porter's
Country Cooking
through the seasons
£9.99


HOME-GROWN HARVEST


THE GREAT DIXTER COOKBOOK
RECIPES FROM AN ENGLISH GARDEN
PHAIDON


the FARMHOUSE KITCHEN cookbook

BUY ONLINE AT:

SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/CSHBOOKS

To browse all books, click the link above or scan the QR code

Books subject to availability

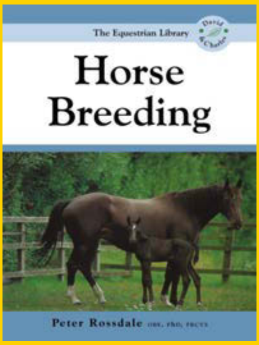
NEW!

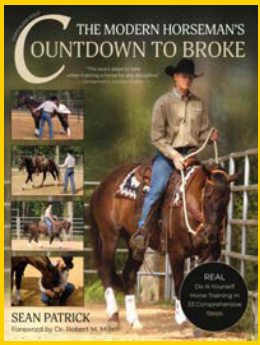
The COUNTRY SMALLHOLDER BOOKSHOP

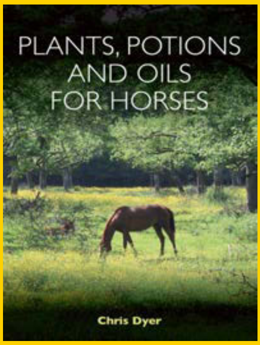
SELECTED BY THE EDITOR OF The COUNTRY SMALLHOLDER MAGAZINE

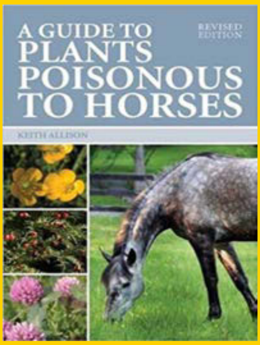
CLICK OR TAP YOUR CHOSEN BOOK

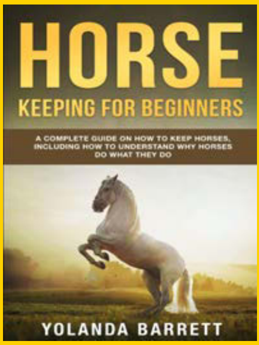
HORSES AND REARING

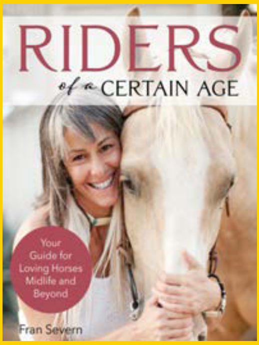

The Equestrian Library
Horse Breeding
Peter Rossdale

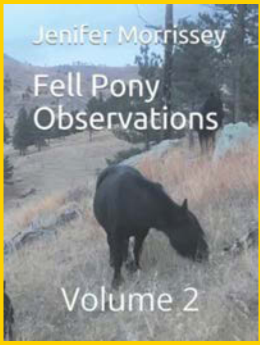

THE MODERN HORSEMAN'S COUNTDOWN TO BROKE
SEAN PATRICK

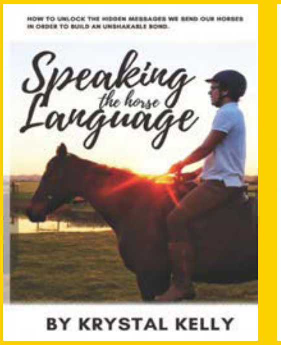

PLANTS, POTIONS AND OILS FOR HORSES
Chris Dyer

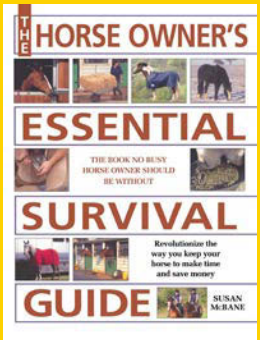

A GUIDE TO PLANTS POISONOUS TO HORSES
REVISED EDITION
KEITH ALLISON


HORSE KEEPING FOR BEGINNERS
A COMPLETE GUIDE ON HOW TO KEEP HORSES, INCLUDING HOW TO UNDERSTAND WHY HORSES DO WHAT THEY DO
YOLANDA BARRETT


RIDERS of a CERTAIN AGE
Your Guide for Loving Horses Midlife and Beyond
Fran Severn

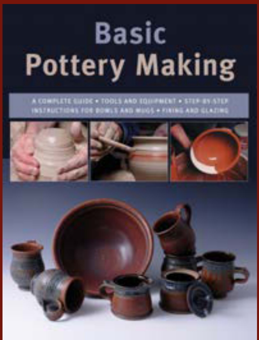

Jenifer Morrissey
Fell Pony Observations
Volume 2

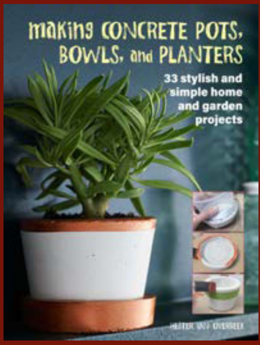

Speaking the horse Language
BY KRYSTAL KELLY


THE HORSE OWNER'S ESSENTIAL SURVIVAL GUIDE
SUSAN McBANE

Horse Owners' Essential Tips
MORE THAN 500 PRACTICAL IDEAS

COUNTRY CRAFTS


Basic Pottery Making


making CONCRETE POTS, BOWLS, and PLANTERS
33 stylish and simple home and garden projects

SIMPLE WEAVE

YARN Spinning WITH A MODERN TWIST
VANESSA KROENING

playful peg loom weaving
STEPHANIE BRADETTE

BUY ONLINE AT:

SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/CSHBOOKS

To browse all books, click the link above or scan the QR code

Books subject to availability

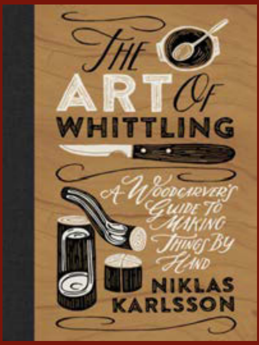
NEW!

The COUNTRY SMALLHOLDER BOOKSHOP

OVER 100 BOOKS TO CHOOSE FROM

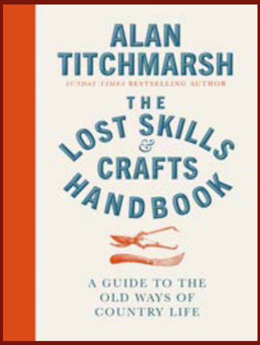
CLICK OR TAP YOUR CHOSEN BOOK

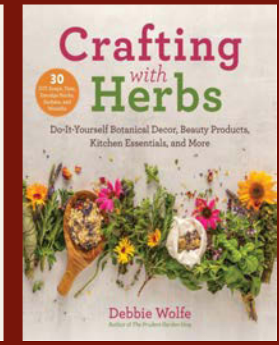
COUNTRY CRAFTS


The Art of Whittling
A Woodcarver's Guide to Making Things by Hand
Niklas Karlsson

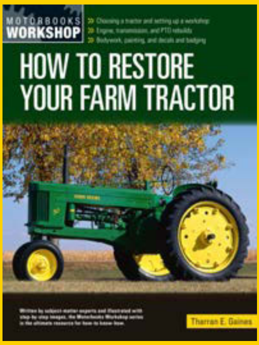
The FarmMade Craft Book
Handmade Projects from America's Farmers
50 Traditional Skills

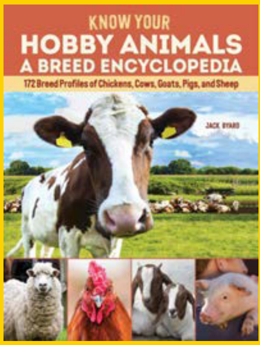
Basic Rug Hooking
Complete Guide to Tools and Materials
Step-by-step Instructions and Photos • 5 Beginner Projects

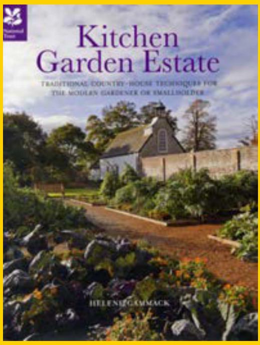

ALAN TITCHMARSH
SUNDAY TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR
THE LOST SKILLS & CRAFTS HANDBOOK
A GUIDE TO THE OLD WAYS OF COUNTRY LIFE

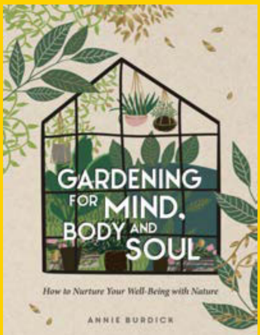

Crafting with Herbs
30
Do-It-Yourself Botanical Decor, Beauty Products, Kitchen Essentials, and More
Debbie Wolfe

GENERAL AND OTHER SMALLHOLDING BOOKS

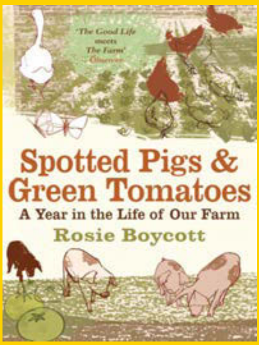

MOTORBOOKS WORKSHOP
HOW TO RESTORE YOUR FARM TRACTOR
Tharran E. Gaines

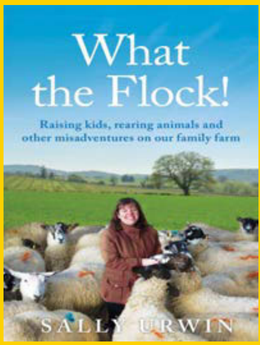

KNOW YOUR HOBBY ANIMALS
A BREED ENCYCLOPEDIA
172 Breed Profiles of Chickens, Cows, Goats, Pigs, and Sheep
JACK BYARD


Kitchen Garden Estate
HELENA GAMMACK

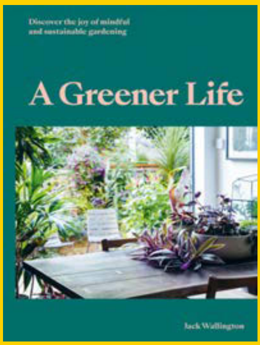

GARDENING FOR MIND, BODY AND SOUL
How to Nurture Your Well-Being with Nature
ANNIE BURDICK

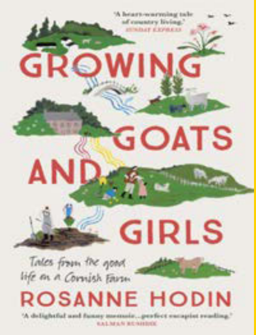
Grow, Cook, Dye, Wear
From seed to style the sustainable way
BELLA GONSHOROVITZ


Spotted Pigs & Green Tomatoes
A Year in the Life of Our Farm
Rosie Boycott


What the Flock!
Raising kids, rearing animals and other misadventures on our family farm
SALLY URWIN

The Kindred Life
Stories & Recipes to Cultivate a Life of Organic Connection
CHRISTINE MARIE BAILEY


Discover the joy of mindful and sustainable gardening
A Greener Life
Jack Wallington


GROWING GOATS AND GIRLS
Tales from the good life on a Cornish farm
ROSANNE HODIN

BUY ONLINE AT:
SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/CSHBOOKS

To browse all books, click the link above or scan the QR code

Books subject to availability

Verm-X®

Taking care of animal health, naturally.

OF&G ORGANIC PRODUCT APPROVED FOR RESTRICTED USE

Kinder to animals, kinder to the environment.

Intestinal support without chemicals.

Organic approved supplements for intestinal support

Our award-winning nutritional supplements have been expertly developed with leading medical herbalists and are made with pure, 100% natural active ingredients to help maintain intestinal hygiene and over-all health. Furthermore, our Verm-X Original range of pellets for poultry, sheep, goats, pigs, cows, horses and llamas are OF&G Organic certified for use on organic holdings. Helping you to take care of animal health, naturally.

Certified B Corporation

Universal Feed Assurance Scheme UFAS UFAS 6007

ETHICAL AWARD THE ETHICAL COMPANY ORGANISATION

VETERINARY APPROVED

made in the uk

OF&G ORGANIC PRODUCT APPROVED FOR RESTRICTED USE

LEADING NATURAL ANIMAL CARE 20 YEARS Verm-X® Est. 2002

verm-x.com